

Hafa Adai!

PSS returns \$96K in CBDG funding to NMHC. **PAGE 2**
Customs imposes 60% tax on vaping products. **PAGE 5**

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXIX, Issue No. 247

www.saipantribune.com

MONDAY DECEMBER 16, 2019

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Double slaying



A police detective leads chief prosecutor John Bradley and another prosecutor to the door of Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant in San Antonio, where the owner of the establishment and her helper were found dead Friday morning after they were reportedly shot by still unidentified person/s.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A businesswoman and a female baker were found dead in San Antonio Friday morning after they were shot by still unidentified person/s inside a restaurant that produces rice cakes.



Linhua Cui



Li Na Lim

» **Businesswoman, female baker shot; police yet to release possible motive**

The killing, which shocked the CNMI community, happened inside the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant on the first floor of a two-story commercial building located in front of the former UIC Garment Factory.

As of press time last night, the Department of Public Safety has yet to release the identity of the victims.

Saipan Tribune sources, however, identified the victims as Li Na Lim, 42, single, a

See **DOUBLE** on **Page 4**

'US should recognize A. Samoans as citizens'



By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and
JENNIFER KELLEHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—People born in the territory of American Samoa should be recognized as U.S. citizens, a federal judge in Utah decided Thursday in a case filed amid more than a century of legal limbo but whose eventual impact remains to be seen.

The cluster of Pacific islands southwest of Hawaii is the only place in the country without an automatic claim to citizenship. People born there are labeled U.S. nationals, meaning they pay taxes but cannot vote, run for office or apply for certain government jobs.

U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups sided with three

See **US** on **Page 4**

NMTI appeals for help to prevent closure

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a last-ditch attempt to save the Northern Marianas Tech-



nical Institute from closing, NMTI chief executive officer Agnes M. McPhetres is reaching out to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to mediate, lest the institute is forced to stop operations starting today, Monday, Dec. 16.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) raised this concern at the House of Representatives session on Capital Hill last Friday, having read the letter that was addressed to Torres.

"We are now in the last month of the first quarter and

have held on as long as we possibly can by drawing on other very limited financial resources. But we are now at the very end of our financial rope," McPhetres wrote.

The CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program funding is NMTI's only financial source for ongoing program operations as they do not receive local appropriations in the annual budget.

The letter also stated that they have been informed by

See **NMTI** on **Page 4**

INSIDE



LOCAL
Soccer freestyler Joel Fruit makes a triumphant return to the annual CNMI Got Talent.

PAGE 13



BUSINESS
Kiribati is preparing for an exciting year in international cruise ship visitation in 2020.

PAGE 14



LIFE & STYLE
The Hallmark Channel has pulled ads for a website that featured two brides kissing.

PAGE 20



SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE
QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED
ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local



MARK RABAGO

Acting Public School System Finance and Budget director Kimo Rosario, second from right, hands over \$96,375.30 in Community Development Block Grant funding to Northern Marianas Housing Corp. corporate director Jesse Palacios, fourth from right, during a break in the NMHC meeting last Friday at the NMHC office in Garapan. Also in photo are other members of the NMHC board and NMHC officers.

PSS returns \$96K in CBDG funding to NMHC

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Public School System returned to the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. last Friday a total of \$96,375.30 in Community Development Block Grant funding that was originally intended for three PSS projects that didn't push through or lacked proper documentation.

Acting PSS Finance and Budget director Kimo Rosario turned over a check worth over \$96,000 during last Friday's NMHC board meeting where he also serves as chair-

man. The monies represent NMHC funding that PSS got for at least three school projects that never took off: the Marianas High School collateral equipment, a proposed swimming pool at the Saipan Southern High School, and the library extension of Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

"PSS, with the blessing of the Board of Education, approved the return of this sum. I'm sorry it took this long," Rosario said, adding that newly appointed Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada wanted to present

the check himself but had another appointment.

NMHC corporate director Jesse Palacios was more than happy to receive the check from PSS. He said the funding would be used as seed money for the \$244 million CBDG-Disaster Recovery money that NMHC will soon be receiving from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The new money is intended to help the CNMI rebuild in the wake of Super Typhoon Yutu.

"[The grant funding requires NMHC] to come up with a project plan and hire personnel to work on the policies and procedures and the CBDG-DR money doesn't have an initial funding for us to prepare all these things," Palacios said.

He said the money remitted by PSS will help NMHC hire a consultant "to put the action plan together."

"Any money received will definitely help us out. We're [going to] use our own money but it isn't enough. The budget for a whole year is at least \$1.5 million. So, it's a start," he added.

The return of the money means PSS is now eligible to apply for a share of the close to \$244-million CBDG-DR funding. When asked about this, Palacios was noncommittal but optimistic that PSS would eventually be allowed to participate in the program once again.

"This is the first step in the process. We can certainly entertain any PSS project applications. We will inform [U.S. Housing and Urban Development] about this that they kind of owned up on what happened in the past so they want to rectify that and move forward," the NMHC corporate director added.

At the end of the day, Palacios said NMHC will work with PSS for the benefit of the CNMI's students.

"It's more for the students to benefit from future CBDG projects. We'll definitely keep PSS in mind when money from future CBDG projects, not only the CBDG-DR, comes in," he added.

Rosario earlier said that if PSS does become eligible

See PSS on Next Page

THE GOAL MUST BE ZERO ACCIDENTS

LP GAS WUSHIN

Since 1983 Committed to Safety Excellence

For your LPGas needs, please call 322-7415 or 322-8733
Open from 8:00am - 5:00pm Monday to Friday | 8:00am - 2:00pm Saturday

SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

Over \$175,000 in prizes won in the CNMI.

DRAW NUMBER 4007 **DRAW DATE 12/14/2019**

WINNING NUMBERS

39 31 40 34 9 1

Next draw JACKPOT \$2 MILLION **Get your tickets NOW!**

Visit our NEW website:
www.nmsalottery.com
Now available on Android and iOS devices.

Open Enrollment Session

CNMI GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PLAN

Friday, December 20, 2019 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

at the Governor Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-purpose Center

Our staff will be available all day to receive Enrollment Applications and Change of Status Forms.

Plan Presentations will be at **10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.**

Why choose StayWell?

- Get money back! (Refund* of pre-funded deductible)
- Medical & Dental plans available
- No Deductibles
- No Referrals required
- Seek care from our network of providers in CNMI, Guam, Asia and the U.S.
- Receive exclusive member discounts from our StayWell Perks Partners

Enroll today!

*Subscribers who have been enrolled and with monthly payments paid for at least six months within a policy year are eligible for refunds. Other conditions apply. Call StayWell Saipan for details.

| RATES | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| | MEDICAL ONLY | MEDICAL & DENTAL |
| CLASS I | \$ 82.00 | \$ 108.00 |
| CLASS II | \$ 164.00 | \$ 216.00 |
| CLASS III | \$ 260.00 | \$ 317.00 |



Public warned of rip currents and high seas

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through 6am Wednesday. A small craft advisory is also in effect until 6am Tuesday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present along east facing reefs of Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan, especially on some beaches such as Ritidian and Gun beaches in Guam and Obyan Beach on Saipan. The high risk of rip currents could extend to north facing reefs.

Fresh to strong trade winds will produce hazardous conditions for small craft for the next couple of days. The stronger winds will result in building seas and east winds of 20 to 25 knots with gusts to 30 knots.

A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Rip currents are powerful channels of water flowing quickly away from shore, which occur most often at low spots or breaks in the sandbar and in the vicinity of structures such as groins, jetties, and piers. Heed the advice of lifeguards, beach patrol flags, and signs.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. If you become caught in a rip

current, yell for help. Remain calm. Do not exhaust yourself and stay afloat while waiting for help. If you have to swim

out of a rip current, swim parallel to shore and back toward the beach when possible. Do not attempt to swim directly

against a rip current as you will tire quickly.

The public is advised to avoid venturing out along

east facing reefs and beaches. Strong rip currents will be life threatening.

Inexperienced mariners,

especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid sailing in these conditions. *(Saipan Tribune)*

HOLIDAY SALES EVENT

2019 MAZDA

CX-3



STARTING AT

\$19,995



OR AS
LOW AS

\$142

PER
PAYCHECK



• Fuel-efficient, 4-cyl. Engine • Automatic Transmission • Push-button Start • 17" Aluminum Alloy Wheels
• Smart City Brake Support • Rear Cross Traffic Alert • Mazda CONNECT Infotainment System w/ 7" Touchscreen Display & Voice Command
• Rearview Camera • Blind-spot Monitoring System



TONY ROMA'S
RIBS SEAFOOD STEAKS

FREE \$500 GIFT CERTIFICATE

FOR EVERY PURCHASE OF CX-5



Payless SuperFresh & Truckload Store

PSS

From Page 3

anew, the CDBG-DR program funding will only cover a portion of the costs of repair.

"For example, if the Hopwood [Middle School] repairs cost \$24 million, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency covers \$10 million, the CDBG-DR funding will cover the remaining \$14 million," he said during the Board of Education special meeting earlier this month.

PSS is slated to receive over \$700,000 worth of reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said that getting the CDBG-DR funding will boost the process of getting PSS back up and running.

The over \$243 million grant will be used for CNMI recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu, which hit Saipan and Tinian in October 2018.



2019 MAZDA

CX-5



STARTING AT

\$21,995



OR AS
LOW AS

\$156

PER
PAYCHECK

• Fuel-efficient, 4-cyl. Engine • Automatic Transmission • Push-button Start • 17" Aluminum Alloy Wheels • Smart City Brake Support
• Mazda CONNECT Infotainment System w/ 7" Touchscreen Display & Voice Command • Rearview Camera
• Blind-spot Monitoring System • Rear Cross Traffic Alert



TRIPLE J MAZDA

Beach Road, Chalan LauLau **OPEN** Open: Mon-Fri: 8am to 6pm • Sat: 8am to 5pm

Tel: 234-7133/234-3051 autosales@triplejsaipan.com WWW.TRIPLEJSAIPAN.COM



*On approved credit. Some conditions apply. Doc fees and registration not included. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Vehicle may not be exactly as shown. See dealer for more details. Maximum credit card payment toward vehicle purchase is \$2500. While current supplies last. 2019 Mazda CX-3 total price is \$19,995. Financed at 5.5% APR for 60 monthly payments of \$291 or \$134 per paycheck based on 20% down-payment and 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred price is \$17,460. 2019 Mazda CX-5 total price is \$21,995. Financed at 5.5% APR for 60 monthly payments of \$320.10 or \$147 per paycheck based on 20% down-payment and 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred price is \$19,206.



NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy, seated in front at extreme left, and Immigration Services officer Shelia Kely, seated in front at extreme right, join 19 new U.S. citizens in a group photo after a naturalization ceremony in federal court Thursday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



Alexander Kochikyan, a Star Marianas pilot and a native of Armenia, holds a U.S. flag and a certificate as U.S. citizen after a naturalization ceremony in the U.S. District Court for the NMI Thursday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



CDA DONATION

Commonwealth Development Authority Manuel Sablan, second from left, and Youth Affairs acting special assistant Roy Ada hold up the transfer receipt for the five refurbished computers CDA is donating to Youth Affairs Thursday at the CDA Building on San Jose. Also in photo are PC Merge's Ted Deleon Guerrero and his son and CDA director Ralph Demapan, right, and the rest of the CDA staff joining the group.

MARK RABAGO

DOUBLE

From Page 1

Korean woman, and Linhua Cui, 54, single, of Chinese-Korean descent.

Some members of the Korean and Chinese community said that Lim owned Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant, while Cui, a baker, helped Lim in the business.

When asked Saturday night about reports that the victims had been shot, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres affirmed the shooting but declined to say more about the crime besides expressing hope that the police will get the bottom of this crime, solve the homicide, and catch the perpetrators.

Torres said he has not been briefed yet whether DPS has made any arrest as of Saturday.

In a press release the police issued last Friday, it said that DPS received a call last Friday at 7:35am, reporting two "unresponsive" individuals at a Korean restaurant that produces rice cakes in San Antonio. The press release did not indicate who called the police.

Police were then dispatched to the scene and confirmed the report about the two "unresponsive" females inside the restaurant. DPS crime scene technicians were dispatched to the scene. DPS has classified the case as a homicide.

"This case remains ongoing and is pending further investigation," said DPS spokesman Adrian Pangelinan; he urged anybody who has any information on the case

to call 911 or the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042, or the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272.

So many computer users tried accessing the *Saipan Tribune's* website shortly after running a breaking news about the homicide Friday morning that it crashed.

At about 9:35am Friday, at least two police officers were seen scouring the grassy area across the road of the restaurant.

Some concerned Koreans and Chinese nationals who are friends of the victims later began arriving at the scene. Police officers talked to them to obtain more information.

As more police started arriving at the scene, some Chinese nationals renovating a two-story building adjacent to the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant building had left the site. Only a Filipino worker was left.

At 10:30am, a Korean woman, identified as a friend of one of the victims, arrived on a van and started crying while standing outside the restaurant, which had been secured by a police line.

An hour later, chief prosecutor John Bradley and a new prosecutor with the Office of the Attorney General also arrived. A police detective guided them to the scene.

Bradley and the new prosecutor did not go inside the establishment and just viewed the crime scene from the main door of the restaurant. After a few minutes, the two left. Bradley said it's too early to comment about the incident.

Members of the Korean and Chinese community told *Saipan Tribune* that victim Lim used to be a tourist guide and that she took over the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant only a year ago. The previous owner had gone back to South Korea.

Cui, on the other hand, was one of the pioneer garment factory workers on Saipan. Cui was employed for a long time as a baker at Paris Croissant in western Garapan and had been helping Lim run the Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant.

A Korean businessman, who requested anonymity, said Cui was a very nice person and very helpful.

The businessman said that when Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed their house and shop in October 2018, Cui offered her apartment room in Dandan for his wife to stay.

The businessman said that, although his house and shop had no power, he did not leave the site to secure it from burglars. His wife, however, stayed at Cui's apartment for a month.

The businessman's wife said that Cui didn't like dogs but that she still allowed her to bring her dog to her (Cui's) apartment unit during her monthlong stay.

Cui's family members from China are expected to arrive soon on Saipan.

The crime scene is only a stone's throw from Royal Poker in Afetnas, where security guard James Patrick Deleon Guerrero was fatally shot by a masked man during an attempted robbery in April 2015. That case remains unsolved.

ERRATA

■ The article titled "Nishida gets full-ride scholarship" that was published on Dec. 13 incorrectly named the scholarship recipient. It should have been Kate Yamamoto Ishida. The online story has been corrected already. Our apologies for the error.

■ In the story titled "New bridge opens in Kagman" that was published on Dec. 12, 2019, it incorrectly stated that the bridge cost \$2.1 million to build. This is incorrect. The project is part of a road improvement project that costs \$2.1 million. The online story has been corrected already. Our apologies.

US

From Page 1

people from American Samoa who sued to be recognized as citizens. He ruled that the Utah residents are entitled to birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment to the Constitution and ordered the government to issue them new passports.

It wasn't immediately clear if the ruling applies outside Utah, which has a large number of people who hail from the territory and other Pacific island communities.

Congress has allowed people born in other American territories like Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands to claim birthright citizenship over the years.

But American Samoa's population of about 55,000 has fallen to the wayside. Their passports say, "This bearer is a United States national and not a United States citizen."

The State Department did not have immediate comment on the ruling.

It's expected to be appealed, said the plaintiffs' attorney, Charles V. Ala'ilima.

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to take up the issue in 2016, after a lower court found the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship didn't apply to American Samoa.

If the new, conflicting ruling out of Utah is affirmed by an appeals court, it could create a "circuit split" and put pressure on the high court to step in.

The ruling shows that while birthright citizenship has had some controversy at the national level, it's "one of the bedrock, foundational rights that our country was built on," said Neil Weare, president of Equally American and one of the attorneys representing the plaintiffs.

"The takeaway from the ruling is that people born in American Samoa living in Utah are now U.S. citizens, and they have all the same rights as other Americans, including the right to vote," Weare said. "These individuals can now go and register to vote and participate in state, federal and local elections."

John Fitsemanu sued after being rejected for jobs that list U.S. citizenship as a requirement. He said he's "ecstatic" about the ruling and plans to register to vote as soon as possible.

NMTI

From Page 1

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente that she is currently unable to act on CW disbursements as there is no law giving Benavente expenditure authority over the funds.

Benavente has sought legislative intervention to rectify the situation with regard to fund distribution and management but, with the passage of such a legislation demanding time, a need for a more immediate intervention was sought through the governor.

"Without being too forward, we believe that the most realistic solution would be through gubernatorial mediation at this point. We only offer such a provisional reprieve while

such legislation is making its way through both houses of the Legislature," the letter adds.

Aside from NMTI, Propst also expressed his concern for the Northern Marianas College.

"I also am concerned about NMC. This is December already and NMC has not received their first quarter allotment to date. These are huge concerns. When we talk about supporting NMTI and NMC, we have to ensure that they are receiving the funding," Propst said.

House Speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) said that the NMTI received \$300,000 last Friday, and NMC \$1.6 million and another \$250,000, also last Friday, and will be getting an additional \$250,000 by Tuesday.

Customs imposes 60% tax on vaping products

An electronic cigarettes store in Dandan will be increasing its prices after the Division of Customs decided to tack a 60% import tax on tobacco substitutes.

Beginning last Dec. 12, Customs began implementing the 60% import tax on e-cigarette products, shortly after determining that they are tobacco substitutes under provisions of the CNMI excise tax law, according to VaprSpot owner Louis Rodgers.

In a text message to the *Saipan Tribune*, Customs director Jose Mafnas confirmed the implementation of the tax.

"Yes, it's true. Same rate as tobacco products," he said.

Because of this, prices at VaprSpot will increase effective Jan. 1, 2020, Rodgers said. In addition, first responder discounts will temporarily end on Dec. 31, 2019, and the store's rewards program will temporarily end on Dec. 21, 2019.

"The tax increase will certainly cause me to have to increase my prices by as much as 33%. And my options are really limited. I either increase prices or reduce my staff and their hours. Or worst case, close, and I'm not ready to do that," he said.

For example, the store's Hi Drip will increase in price from the current \$18 to \$24, its replacement coil from \$4.25 to \$5.45, and its Vinci 40W kit from \$45 to \$59.

The new tax caught Rodgers by surprise, particularly since that there was no official word from Customs about it and he had to learn about it from third party sources.

"It's just sad considering I routinely pick up packages for the shop from the post office and stop by the Customs desk. So, it's disappointing that they didn't even give a courtesy heads up. [There was] no official announcement other than a piece of paper posted by the Customs desk at the post office. I have, however, confirmed it with the agents at the desk," he said.

While he agrees that Customs is just doing its job in enforcing the statute, Rodgers believes that the 60% import tax is a bit excessive.

"I have spoken at length with members of the Legislature as well as an attorney, conveyed my concerns, and the only recourse is to change the law. A 60% tax is extremely excessive and will be a significant cost increase and financial burden

that I cannot carry alone without passing the increase to you, the customer."

He urged his customers to extend their concern to their lawmakers on Capital Hill to have the law amended. "Share your story with your legislators about using an electronic cigarette or Vape. Share your concerns about limited access and higher prices. Do you think higher prices or limited access would steer you back to smoking or chewing? If that is a concern, share it."

He, however, has found a silver lining.

"The only saving grace for my business is that all imports will be taxed. So, you as a consumer who orders online, will also be taxed at the post office by Customs. The difference is I get taxed at the wholesale rate. ...Consumers who orders online and ship to Saipan, will get taxed at the retail rate," he said.

At the end of the day, it will be cheaper for customers to buy e-cigarette products locally rather than ordering online, which is a win for local shop owners. *(Mark Rabago)*

ARMATECH

WiFi System
Services and
Maintenance

Tel: (670) 234-8895/97 • Fax: (670) 234-8894
Mobile: (670) 287-5525 / (670) 783-8895



PHI Pharmacy  

CHRISTMAS Sale

DECEMBER 9 - 28, 2019

Hospital Supplies Diabetes Products

35% OFF
SUPPLEMENTS, VITAMINS & SPORTS NUTRITIONAL PRODUCTS

25% OFF
ALL OTC ITEMS

50% OFF
ON SELECTED ITEMS

Dandan (Joeten Dandan Center)
 Tel. (670) 323-5000/01 | 235-6170/74 • Fax (670) 235-6180
 Mon-Fri: 8am - 6pm • Sat - Sun: 8am - 4pm

Visit us on www.facebook.com/phiparmacy
PHI Pharmacy...the pharmacy you can trust!



NAOMI TUDELA

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Specialist
BS Business Management

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO *Begin Again*



Whether you're 25 or 55, it's never too late to earn a college degree! A degree can open doors to more job opportunities and even a higher income.

Register for NMC's **Spring 2020** Semester today!

Learn More!

Attend a **FREE** Info Session on
Dec. 18, 2019 or Jan. 9, 2020
⌚ 5:30pm 📍 NMC Library



Math & English

Placement Exam Dates
December 16-17, 19, 23, 30
January 6-9, 13, 15-17

First Day of Classes
January 21, 2020

English and Math placement tests starts at 9:30am. Call 237-6774 to make an appointment.

www.marianas.edu

  **NMC.Proa**

 **@GoProa**

Camacho recuses self from investigation on Torres

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saying that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is his godfather, Rep. Joel Castro Camacho (R-Saipan) will be recusing himself from any proceedings that may arise following the minority bloc's request Tuesday for the House of Representatives to create a special committee to investigate Torres.

Camacho announced his move at a House session last Friday, saying he has already discussed the matter with vice

speaker Rep. Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), who is vice chair of the House's Judiciary & Governmental Operations Committee, which Camacho chairs.

"I have discussed this with our vice chairman [Deleon Guerrero] that should any proceedings be initiated, that I will be recusing myself from any proceedings moving forward," he said.

The minority bloc's request for the House leadership to create a special committee to investigate allegations of pub-

lic corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse of public funds by Torres has been forwarded to the Judiciary & Governmental Operations Committee.

Camacho, during the House session last Tuesday, said that Torres is his godfather. He also asserted that he has nothing to hide from the public about his campaign financial earnings.

"I have disclosed my financial interest statement with the Office of the Public Auditor, and I received campaign donations within the confines of the law and OPA regulatory mandates," Camacho said.

The lawmaker made the statement in response to a report that his campaign was funded by Torres' relatives and the casino, through Joaquin Torres' \$1,000 contribution, Rowena Torres' \$500 contribution, and Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC's legal matters vice president Viola Alepuyo's \$500 contribution.

Camacho stressed that his relationship with the governor does not affect his ability to serve the community. "Yes, the governor is my godfather, as he confirmed me for my confirmation long before we both held public office. Does my relationship affect my ability to serve the

community, with the governor? Absolutely not."

Camacho also reiterated that he stands true in serving the needs of his constituents in Precinct 4. "I have never, never taken the people's confidence in me for granted, and I never will. There is a process and I respect and I honor the

process. Let us let the process take its course," he added.

Camacho's office recently completed the renovation of the tennis court on Capital Hill, as well as the repair and upgrade of the basketball court, as part of his ongoing repair and maintenance project of Precinct 4 recreational facilities.

Wanted: Li, Dong Jie

The CNMI Department of Public Safety is seeking the public's help in locating Li, Dong Jie for questioning. If you have any information about Li, Dong Jie's last place of work, last



Dong Jie

or friend, no matter how insignificant it may seem, call 911, the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042, or, if you wish to remain anonymous, you may call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (PR)

10 exchange students sought

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office is looking for 10 students who may be interested in participating in an upcoming exchange student trip to Japan.

According to Yuuki Kishimoto, Saipan Mayor's Office exchange program coordinator, the 37th Japan trip, which is organized and sponsored by the Sanpoen group in the CNMI, will take place this February and their office is currently looking for 10 interested public or private school students.

The trip is scheduled for Feb. 5 to 11 and the students will have the chance to visit two cities, Kyoto and Nagano.

The program is open to both public and private school students from 6th to 12th grade and the deadline to submit an application is on Dec. 20 at 4:30 p.m.

The first three days of the trip will be in Kyoto where the students will have the opportunity to meet and greet the mayor and governor of Kyoto.

They will also spend their days visiting the Kyoto Zoo, Nijo Castle, and Izutsu Yatsushashi, a Japanese confectionary shop.

The last three days will be in Nagano where the students will homestay and visit the Joyama Elementary School. There they will meet and mingle with the students and join them in a class activity.

The participating students will need to shoulder the airfare but the rest of the accommodations like lodging, meals, and transportation will be taken care of by the Sanpoen group.

For interested applicants, feel free to call (670) 234-6208 or visit the Mayor's Office and look for Kishimoto.

Holiday Promotion SALE

New Arrival on Hot Sale

5%-50% OFF

- MIDEA AIRCONDITIONING
- AUX BRAND AIRCONDITIONING
- FREEZER
- REFRIGERATOR
- WASHER
- WATER DISPENSER
- LED ITEMS / CHRISTMAS LIGHT / SOLAR LIGHT
- TV SMART 32" TO 55"
- FAUCETS
- HARDWARE
- HOME APPLIANCES
- RECHARGEABLE SPEAKER ETC.

All rechargeable speakers have bluetooth. Lowest price is down to \$13.99

Located at CK across the U.S. Post Office

HAO'S AIR CONDITIONING

Phone: 234-0680 / 285-0680 Fax: 234-0688
For more info, check us at the store. INSTALLMENT AVAILABLE

ART MAN CORPORATION

- Sewer Pumping
- Snake Wiring
- Portable Toilet Rental
- Leaching Field
- Handling Recyclable Wastes

PMB 122 Box 10000 MP96950
Email :artmancorporation@gmail.com
Tel # : (670) 234-8079 / 287-8079

COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 500237, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 1 (670) 233-1857 • Fax: 1 (670) 233-1856
www.cnmicasinocommission.com
Email: info@cnmicasinocommission.com

AGENDA

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission"), hereby give notice that the Commission has scheduled its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Room located on the 2nd Floor of the Commission's main office at the Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

The following Agenda will be discussed:

- PRELIMINARIES:**
 - Call to Order
 - Roll Call
 - Adoption of Agenda
 - Adoption of Minutes: November 26, 2019
- REPORTS:**
 - Report by the Chairman
 - Report by the Executive Director
- PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS:**
 - Casino Licensee -- Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC ("IPI") -- Updates:
 - Imperial Pacific Resort & Hotel ("IPR"):
 - Update on IPR's Construction
 - Update on the partial opening of the Villas
 - IPI Personnel:
 - Resident Employment Objectives
 - Casino License Agreement -- Annual Plan
 - CKE Resignations: (1) Mr. Mark Brown, IPI Interim Chairman. Effective Date: 12/08/19
(2) Mr. Phil Tydingco, IPI General Counsel. Effective Date: 12/13/2019
 - Responsible Gaming Program
 - Compliance Committee
 - IPI Financial Matters
 - Other Miscellaneous Matters.
- OLD BUSINESS:**
 - Update on House Bill 21-11, HS1:
 - Passed the House of Representatives on December 10, 2019
 - Forwarded to the Senate on December 11, 2019
 - Rolling Chip Program. Request by IPI, dated November 6, 2019, to renew and extend the current VIP Cash and Complimentary Rebate Program from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022. Commission deferred action in the previous meeting. Tax Implications on the Rolling Chip Program inclusive of the Revenue-Sharing Option.
 - Other Old Business Matters
- NEW BUSINESS:**
 - Renewal of Regular Casino Service Provider License -- Gaming Vendor (2-year license):
 - Aruze Gaming America, Inc. (dba: Aruze Gaming Equipment, Inc). Electronic Gaming Machines. Nevada, USA. Initial 2-year Casino Service Provider License will expire on 12/20/2019.
 - Proposed denial of applications for non-gaming Casino Vendor Licenses -- Incomplete Applications:
 - King Deco Engineering Limited. Suppliers of decorative gypsum materials and metal filigrees. Provisional License expired on 9/17/2019.
 - Xiangxing Corporation (dba: Xiangxing Construction & Renovation). Provides construction and renovation work. Provisional license expired on 11/25/2019.
 - Other New Business Matters
- EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
 - Report by Legal Counsel
 - Report by the CCC Audit Division
- ADJOURNMENT**

The Commission reserves the right to amend this agenda and take action on the amended agenda pursuant to 1 CMC §9910 (b). Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912 (a)(7) and 1 CMC §9912 (c), the Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session. In addition, the Commission may extend its official meeting for another day or more, if necessary.

/s/ Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp
Tels: Tels: (670) 234-6868, 234-9447, 234-7689, 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DATE: January 07, 2019 *** TIME: 10:00 AM

"AMENDMENT"
NMHC RFP 2020-001

Conduct and Prepare the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Proposal package will be available on November 13, 2019, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays or you may obtain the proposal package online at www.nmhc.gov.net "Public Notice/Announcements" subtitle "Request for Proposal".

The provisions of the CNMI Procurement regulations, NMIAC 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on ~~December 4, 2019~~ December 19, 2019, at the NMHC Central Office Conference Room in Garapan. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-proposal conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/7689; (670)483-9447; or email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. -- 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Kimo M. Rosario
Acting Chairman of the Board

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon
Acting Director
Division of Procurement & Supply



WHOLESALE TO EVERYONE
TRUCKLOADS DIRECT FROM K-MART

OPEN: Thursday, Friday, & Saturday

Moving Out Sale

Today & Tomorrow

50%-75% MARKDOWNS
ON SELECTED ITEMS

EVERYTHING MUST GO

Furniture, wall art, large appliances, bedding,
luggage, small appliances and many others.



Monday & Tuesday
December 16 & 17
10AM to 7PM

Limited stock and inventory!

Fourteen groups, including 10 floats, participated the Marianas Visitors Authority's annual Christmas in the Marianas Parade of Lights along Beach Road in Garapan Saturday night.

Koblerville Elementary School won first place in the float competition, while the Green Meadow School and Marianas High School floats won second and third place, respectively.

The parade started at the Garapan Fishing Base, turned left to the American Memorial Park intersection, left toward the front of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, and ended up at the Paseo de Marianas.

Skymark Airlines' well-lit plane float was an attention-grabber from all the people who watched the parade that featured floats adorned with Christmas lights. School marching units, wearing Christmas costumes, also joined the parade. Many tourists on the shoulder of the road could be seen taking photos and videos of the floats and marchers.

At the Paseo de Marianas' stage, students from various schools displayed their costumes in a costume contest that kicked off the many competitions throughout the month.

MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo, who was joined on the MVA float

14 groups join Parade of Lights



Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo, extreme right on the second row, joins MVA staff in a group photo on their float, after the Christmas in the Marianas Parade of Lights along Beach Road in Garapan Saturday night. **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**



Filled with Christmas lights, Skymark Airlines' plane float was among the 10 floats that joined the Christmas in the Marianas Parade of Lights Saturday night. **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**

by deputy managing director Judy Torres, said she is happy to see a huge turnout.

"There's a lot of people that came out tonight. And I think

part of it was that they really wanted to see the Christmas Parade, which was great," Iakopo said, adding that the parade was another way for



Green Meadow School won second place in the float competition. Koblerville Elementary School won first prize in the float competition. **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**



FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Miss Marianas 2019 Shannon T. Sasamoto alights from a car after the Parade of Lights.



Students from various schools pose in front of the crowd during the Christmas costume catwalk contest. **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**

MVA and other agencies, both government and non-profit organizations, to come together to light up the Christmas spirit.

The winning schools from

the recent Christmas in the Marianas caroling contest, Christmas Tree decorating, and holiday skits, along with the winners in the float com-

petition, were also announced after the parade.

The parade participants were the Awaodori Group, Saipan Cares for Animals, Carolinian Affairs Office, Skymark Airlines, MVA, Green Meadow Schools, Commonwealth Cancer Association, Saipan Southern High School, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Marianas High School, Department of Public Safety's DUI, Koblerville Elementary School, Commonwealth Office of Transport Authority, and Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services with Santa Claus. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-20-004

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2019, 2020 & 2021 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set. The \$100 package fee will be waived for firms that had previously registered and paid for a CUC-RFP-19-037 package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Proposal & One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelopes marked "CUC-RFP-20-004, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **December 23, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional RFP will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 10, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Greg Cruz, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address greg.cruz@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLON
Purchasing Administrator

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST DENGUE

Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, and is passed from person to person by mosquitoes. You cannot get dengue from touching or being coughed on.

It is usually a mild illness but can become serious, especially if the sick person has other medical conditions such as diabetes.

Symptoms of Dengue Fever

- ☒ Sudden, high fever
- ☒ Severe headaches and pain behind the eyes
- ☒ Severe joint and muscle pain
- ☒ Fatigue
- ☒ Nausea and vomiting
- ☒ Skin rash that appears 2-5 days after the start of the fever

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, especially if you have just returned from a trip off-island, see your doctor right away.

Protect Against Mosquitoes = Protect Against Dengue

Mosquitoes breed in still water. Get rid of mosquito populations around your home by dumping out buckets, tires, toys, and anything that holds water.

Use Insect repellent

Cover up! Wear long sleeves when outside and cover strollers and cribs with mosquito netting.

Close doors and windows during sunrise and sunset, when mosquitoes are most active.

Put screens on doors and windows and make sure they do not have holes.

For more information on dengue, contact the CHCC Preparedness Program at 234-8950.

For more information on how to control mosquitoes, contact the Bureau of Environmental Health at 664-4780.



THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED BY GRANT NO. NU90TP922040 / CFDA NO. 93.069—
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FROM THE CDC TO THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

Dengue scare over for the Marianas

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The dengue scare is nearly over for the Marianas.

The Pacific Epidemic and Emerging Disease Alert has reported a de-escalation—or fewer numbers—of dengue cases in the Pacific in the past few weeks. That means lesser chances of the disease cropping up in the CNMI.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. spokesperson Zoe Travis said as much, saying that the last reported case of dengue fever in the region was last Nov. 11. As of Nov. 26, dengue cases have now decreased in the Marianas, she added.

“There has been a de-escalation of dengue cases reported in Guam for the past few weeks. Nov. 26 was the last update, the last local case was on Nov. 11,” she said.

The red alert for dengue in the Marianas has since been changed to a blue alert, which

means the epidemic in the region is decreasing.

“We’re looking pretty good,” she said,

Travis also mentioned since the Marianas is transitioning into the dry season, dengue transmission will be more difficult.

“We’re entering the dry season, which will make dengue transmission [more] difficult, although it’s never going to be zero here on the tropical islands,” she said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, CHCC received its first case of dengue back in August from a patient who returned from an off-island trip and contracted the disease in Palau. Their second case was seen in early September with another patient who also returned Palau.

Although there is a vaccine for dengue fever, it has only been approved for those who have already been infected with dengue.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday greetings go out to Hank Jr. Arurang, better known as Kuma, who is celebrating his birthday today, Dec. 16, 2019. May the Lord continue His blessings upon you and lots of love. We love you! Greetings come from Mom, Dad, and your two musketeers brothers.



**has your
HOLIDAY
CASH!**

EXPRESS FINANCIAL is your local money source for quick cash for all your needs.

Helping you succeed financially is our top priority. In most cases we can get the cash in your hands the same day we receive your application.

**Close a loan this
Holiday Season
and receive a
\$15.00
Gift Certificate
redeemable at**

**Payless SuperFresh
& Truckload Store**



Town House
A Subsidiary of Jones & Guerrero Company, Inc.

Your dependable money source

Choose any of these 3 convenient options to apply

- OPTION 1** Call us direct at **670 235-6032** AND OUR FRIENDLY LOCAL STAFF WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR APPLICATION OVER THE PHONE.
- OPTION 2** Fill out the attached application and fax to **670-235-6040** and we will call you within a few minutes of receiving the fax.
- OPTION 3** Fill out the attached application, scan and email to **cccar6985users@carfinancial.com** and a friendly member of our sales team will call you.

QUICK APPLICATION

PRIMARY APPLICANT

First Name: _____ M.I. _____ Last Name: _____

Employer: _____

Length of Employment: _____ Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Best Time & Number for Express Financial to contact you:

Best Time To Call _____ Best Number To Call _____

SECONDARY APPLICANT

First Name: _____ M.I. _____ Last Name: _____

Employer: _____

Length of Employment: _____ Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Best Time & Number for Express Financial to contact you:

Best Time To Call _____ Best Number To Call _____

Mailing Address: Street/Box _____ Village _____ Zip Code _____

Town House Shopping Center

Chalan Kanoa Beach Road (across Mt. Carmel Cathedral)
P.O. Box 504084, Saipan MP 96950 | Tel. (670) 235-6032



BIG HOT PASTRAMI MELT

on Sunflower Crunch Bread



**Juicy cut pepper crusted beef, slices of crispy pickles,
yellow mustard and melted provolone cheese.**

For a limited time only.

Subway® restaurants proudly feature **Coca-Cola** and **6** products.

GUAM LOCATIONS:
AAFB Exchange
Agana Shopping Center
Agat

Barrigada
Guam Premier Outlets
Mangilao
Micronesia Mall

Mobil Airport Road Service Station
Mobil Barrigada Heights Service Station
Mobil Yigo North Service Station
Mobil Ysengsong Service Station

Naval Hospital
NEXCOM Bldg #258
NEX Mini Mart/Gas Station
Tumon

SAIPAN LOCATIONS:
Gualo Rai
Chalan Piao
Paseo de Marianas, Garapan

Ingredients not exactly as shown. SUBWAY® is a Registered Trademark of Subway IP Inc. ©2019 Subway IP Inc.

SUBWAY

www.subwaypacific.com

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXIX, Issue No. 246

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The House takes a much-needed swipe at lowering drug prices

Although lawmakers and President Trump have talked a good game about bringing down prescription drug prices, they've managed to take few, if any, steps toward that goal. Trump's most dramatic proposals—tying the price of certain Medicare drugs to their prices overseas and barring payments from drug manufacturers to middlemen—have either been dropped or held up by internal bickering. And a Senate committee's proposal to rein in drug price hikes, which garnered a rare degree of bipartisan support, has been stalled by opposition from Republican senators.

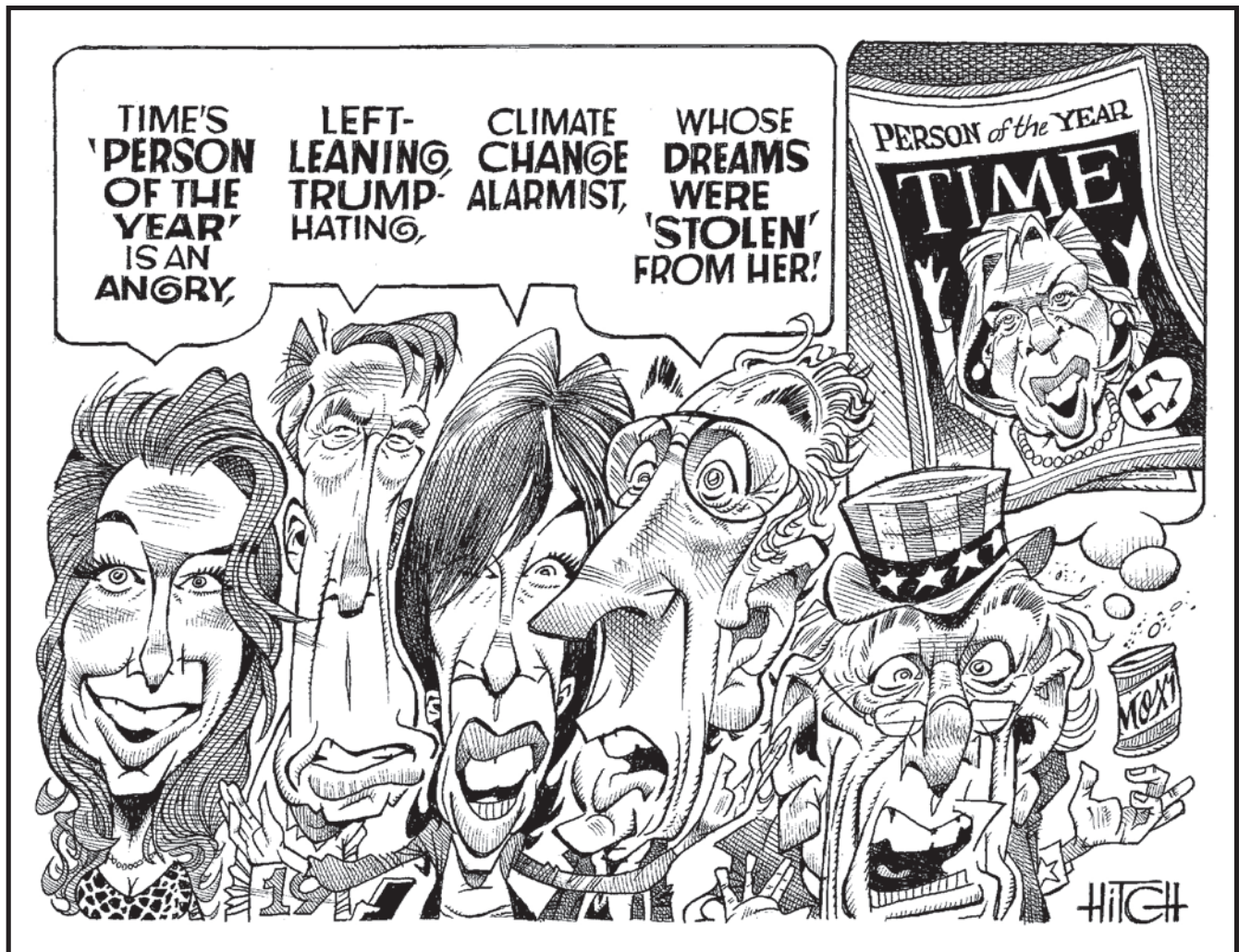
Yet lawmakers haven't given up, as demonstrated Thursday when the House passed HR 3, a bill that would empower Medicare to negotiate the price of up to 250 prescription drugs per year while also guarding consumers with employer-provided health benefits against sharp increases in drug costs. Although the bill may be too ambitious for the Senate and the president to swallow, its passage in the House injects some badly needed momentum into the drive to rein in spending on prescription medications.

Drug manufacturers often argue that their prices aren't the big issue for consumers, given that prescription drugs have steadily accounted for only about 10% of U.S. health care spending. But the costs of brand-name and specialty drugs have been escalating far faster than inflation, a problem that is only partially offset by the declining prices of many generic medications. As a consequence of high costs, millions of Americans are unable to afford the medicines they need; according to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey, almost 30% of U.S. consumers didn't fill a prescription, skipped doses or took an over-the-counter medication instead in the past 12 months.

Cutting drugmakers' prices comes with a tradeoff, however. Bringing a new drug to market is an extremely expensive proposition, requiring manufacturers and their investors to put a significant amount of money at risk. Any move to restrain prices inevitably reduces their incentive to invest in drug research and development. That means some breakthrough drugs may not be developed, or may be pushed further back in the pipeline.

But there's no telling which new drugs would be forgone; indeed, no matter how prices are regulated, the incentives for continuing to invest in potential blockbuster cures for widespread or costly diseases would remain strong. And the current system seems unsustainable, as new drugs are popping up at mind-boggling prices of \$1 million or more for a course of treatment. Even some drugmakers agree that we need to switch to a system that prices drugs not according to how much the market will bear but according to their value—that is, how much they improve the lives of the people who take them. But that's a difficult and politically sensitive calculation because it may require putting a value on human life and the quality thereof.

See HOUSE on Next Page



For island vets, benefits are a 4,000-mile plane ride away

After coming home from war and striving to reintegrate into civilian life, many military veterans feel like they're alone on an island. For service members returning to Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, it's more than just a feeling.

Four thousand miles west of Hawaii, 1,500 miles south of Japan, and 1,600 miles east of the Philippines, United States military veterans live, work, and strive to heal the wounds of war in extreme isolation.

In these island territories, it's not unusual for nearly half a graduating high school class to join the military. When faced with a choice between the low-paying hospitality industry or military service, the latter offers young people a higher salary, the security of lifetime government benefits, and a chance to get off the islands. Because of these enticing perks, the 2010 Census estimated that 5.6 percent of the population on these islands is active-duty military compared with 0.4 percent of the mainland U.S. population (United States Census Bureau).

These veterans make the same commitments and sacrifices as their mainland counterparts: they undergo intense training, they leave their families, they fight our wars, they risk their lives. When they return from service, they need adequate medical care and relief from post-traumatic stress, but they also need access to mental health care for help with the deeper, darker scars of war: the grief, shame, guilt, and sorrow associated with moral injury.

Moral injury is a wound to the soul and the psyche. It confuses veterans' place in society by warping their understanding of right and wrong. A returning veteran wonders, "Was I justified in doing the things I did in war? Am I still a good person if I did bad things? Can I be forgiven?"

These are the questions that haunt combat veterans. Their answers can only be found with long-term, consistent, dependable mental health care, community support, and a diverse regime of healing modalities, which can include anything from meditation and yoga to art therapy and nature immersion.

Like veterans on the mainland, the returning service members of Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan must navigate the complex labyrinth of the VA health system in order to partake in the benefits promised to them. Unlike many of their mainland counterparts, island vets often find that mental health care is either geographically inaccessible or only available via telehealth services like video chat.

Some mainland veterans have to drive several hours to reach

By TOM VOSS
Military Times

Iraq War veteran Tom Voss and his sister Rebecca Anne Nguyen are co-authors of the new book Where War Ends: A Combat Veteran's 2,700-Mile Journey to Heal—Recovering from PTSD and Moral Injury through Meditation.



the nearest VA hospital. But many vets who live on these islands have to take a seven-hour flight—some 4,000 miles—to see a therapist or other specialist at the nearest VA hospital in Hawaii.

Some veterans have to pay for their flight upfront and get reimbursed months later. Those whose flights are paid upfront by the VA report poorly coordinated, mismatched flights. Sometimes, the flight is paid upfront but the veteran has to pay out-of-pocket for ground transportation, meals and lodging, with the hope of getting partially reimbursed later. And with time away from work and family, in-person mental health care can quickly become an investment of \$3,000 or more.

According to Rep. Tina Sablan of the Northern Mariana Islands, some veterans make the trip to Hawaii to find they need treatment that hasn't yet been approved by the VA.

"It is not uncommon to hear of a vet making the 4,000-mile flight to Hawaii for a particular appointment, finding that they need an additional type of care or service that wasn't already approved by the VA, and then flying all the way back to the Marianas to wait for approval for yet another appointment and flight."

On a recent trip to the islands, I was astounded to learn that the yoga-for-veterans course I was teaching was one of the only accessible healing modalities provided to address veteran mental health—and I was a visiting teacher, temporarily on the islands as part of a private (non-government) program called VEToga.

On the island of Rota, I met an Army veteran who was separated from his wife and suffering intensely from post-traumatic stress and moral injury.

"I am lost and confused with my life," he wrote me after the yoga course. "I am close to ending my life."

He needed help, fast. His options were to purchase a plane ticket and fly to Hawaii to see a therapist or specialist; purchase

See 4,000 on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Nancy Pelosi says Catholics don't hate—but I do

Last week, on her way out of her weekly news conference, Nancy Pelosi was asked by James Rosen of Sinclair Broadcast Group whether she hated Trump. Rosen was referencing comments by Rep. Doug Collins, R-Ga., who'd earlier suggested that the Democrats were impeaching the president because they hate him.

Pelosi, who had been walking away from the podium, exploded. She pointed a finger at Rosen and said "I don't hate anybody. I was raised in a Catholic house. We don't hate anybody."

Then she added, "And as a Catholic, I resent your using the word hate in a sentence that addresses me. I pray for the president all the time. So don't mess with me when it comes to words like that."

I watched the exchange between Pelosi and Rosen with a mixture of emotions: pride, amusement, astonishment and ultimately anger.

It may surprise some, but I was proud of this woman, even though I reject her politics and question her values. I have to admire anyone who is gutsy enough to say "don't mess with me" to a room of reporters. Plus, this petite Italian brunette from Baltimore is—no one can deny—fierce. She reminds me a bit of my own mother (but not as nice).

But I was amused because of Pelosi's idea that Catholics don't hate anyone. As a Catholic, I can assure you that Pelosi does not speak for me, because I hate a lot of people, including some of the folks currently in Congress with the initials AOC.

While I am certain that Pelosi believes that her heart is bursting at the seams just like the Grinch after his conversion, her actions do not show it. Father Joe Zaleski, an archdiocesan priest who appeared on my radio show last week, observed: "It is the church's teaching that we should not hate ... (but) look at what she said you know, 'I was raised in a Catholic house not to hate,' but then she calls (Trump) a coward, then she calls him memes ... She says she prays for the president but, I'm not so sure I believe that."

My astonishment stemmed from the fact that Pelosi would

even make an issue of her faith when the reporter was simply asking whether she agreed with a fellow legislator's comments. To turn a question about politics into a referendum on religion was, frankly, weird.

But my overriding emotion triggered by Pelosi's statement was profound anger. No one should try to hide behind a religion when they have spent most of their professional lives misrepresenting, as Pelosi has done through her passionate commitment to supporting abortion.

In a "Meet the Press" interview in 2008, Pelosi said that "as an ardent, practicing Catholic, (abortion) is an issue that I have studied for a long time. And what I know is, over the centuries, the doctors of the church have not been able to make that definition." A slew of bishops had to correct her. In 2013, she opposed a bill that would have banned all abortions after 20 weeks, and is not a fan of the Hyde Amendment. She has even stated that

By **CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS**
Philadelphia Daily News

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News. Readers may send her email at cflowers1961@gmail.com.



opposing abortion is not required of Catholics.

For Pelosi to use her supposed Catholicism as a shield is unacceptable. As Matthew 7:16 notes, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Which means, if you have to tell people what a good Catholic you are, don't bother.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The PSS incentive pay: Why I want to wait

Teachers will get their bonus. Trust me. The only question is "When?"

In a previous board meeting, we were told there was money for everybody, including the bus drivers, maintenance, and support staff. Of course, I was in favor of everybody receiving their bonuses. However, in the last meeting, they told us that only the teachers, librarians, counselors, vice principals, and principals will be receiving their increases. To that I firmly said "no." I really want everyone in the Public School System to have a great holiday season. My own children, who are teachers, have been opposed to this, too. As much as I want my children to have bonuses to spend for Christmas, I must think about all the families in PSS, not just my own.

I grew up with the mentality that if there is not enough food to share with everyone, then it is not polite to eat in front of the others. In this situation, it is not polite to give a bonus of \$2,000-

\$3,000 to teachers, librarians, counselors, vice principals, and principals, who may earn upwards of \$40,000-\$90,000 a year, while we neglect to give at least \$500 to the bus drivers, maintenance, administrative staff, and school aides, who may be only earning \$25,000 a year.

I believe that teachers are the heart of a school but a heart without hands and feet cannot function correctly. The maintenance, administrative staff, school aides, and bus drivers are part of the hands and feet of our PSS body. If we are to affirm that PSS is one big family, we need to make sure everyone has enough to eat before you can get a second serve.

Let it be known to all that the incentive grant expires June of 2020. Therefore, there is still time for everyone to have their slice of the share. If the money for the support staff never comes in, I will go ahead and support the dispersal among the teachers and principals. I do not want to waste free money from a federal grant, but we have to try to help everyone, especially those who are most in need. While we wait for more funding to help all our employees, we should use these current funds to start repairing the broken schools and fulfill the promise we made to our kids: "Students First."

I kindly and humbly ask for your understanding and patience with this critical issue. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the administrators and teachers for all that you do.

Andrew L. Orsini

Member, CNMI State Board Of Education

HOUSE

From Page 10

The House proposal moves toward value-based pricing, but only gingerly. For the 50 to 250 medications that face no competition and account for the largest cost to Medicare, the government would bargain with manufacturers over prices, considering such factors as research and production costs, prior federal aid in the development of that drug, and how much of a therapeutic advance it represents over alternative treatments. Most important, the bill would cap the price Medicare pays for those drugs at 120% of the average charged in Canada, Australia, Japan and three European nations—effectively relying on those countries' calculations of the drugs' value.

The six countries pay significantly less than we do for medications, so in the short term, the bill would result in huge savings for Medicare. And because Medicare is so large, with almost 60 million enrollees, changes in the program tend to ripple through the rest of the market. Over the long term, though, manufacturers would have an incentive to demand higher prices in those six countries, leading to lower savings here. Nevertheless, such rebalancing would be welcome because it would force foreign consumers to pick up a more fair share of the tab for developing new drugs.

Meanwhile, the bill would use most of the money Medicare saves on prescription drugs to fund new dental, hearing and vision coverage at no extra cost to Medicare Part B enrollees. It's true that many senior citizens already purchase this coverage through Medicare Advantage or supplemental insurance plans. But moving those important benefits into Medicare itself would vastly improve older consumers' access to them.

Only two Republicans in the House voted for HR 3, largely because of their concern about the price caps. But as shown by proposals from the White House and the Senate's health committee, there is a consensus emerging around the need to reduce drug costs and tie prices to value. Lawmakers just need to find a way to turn that consensus into tangible progress.

(c)2019 Los Angeles Times

4,000

From Page 10

a plane ticket to Guam and try to see one of the clinical psychologists or psychiatrists who periodically visit the VA outpatient clinic there; purchase a plane ticket to Saipan and try to get an appointment with the one licensed clinical social worker at the VA there; or video chat with someone online.

Sablan says that telehealth mental health services have proven a poor substitute for access to human-to-human healing.

"Telehealth mental health services are available to Marianas veterans, but we have heard many complaints about that," said Sablan.

"Vets say they don't like the impersonal contact via TV screen or laptop, and there is high turnover of therapists, so they are constantly having to repeat their stories and build rapport anew, which is frustrating and discouraging in any case but especially over a screen."

Because of the level of care he needed, the veteran I met was thinking of leaving Rota altogether and moving 7,000 miles away to Texas, where he had been stationed during his time in the service. When moving 7,000 miles away from home is the best choice for a suicidal veteran to get the help he needs, it's clear we have a gap in care.

The government has not invested in mental health services for these islands because it considers these veterans a low-priority population. Their low numbers when compared with the mainland veteran population make them easy to overlook. The VA further evaluates the need for care based on the number of veterans taking advantage of the current care offerings.






Since it takes a superhuman effort to get care in the first place, demand for care remains low. Getting on a plane just to see a therapist in person is a lot to ask of anyone. But for someone with moral injury, for whom just getting out of bed in the morning can feel next to impossible, the monumental nature of seeking help can stop them from seeking help altogether. Demand for care remains low even though the need for care is high. Since demand is low, government resources remain low.

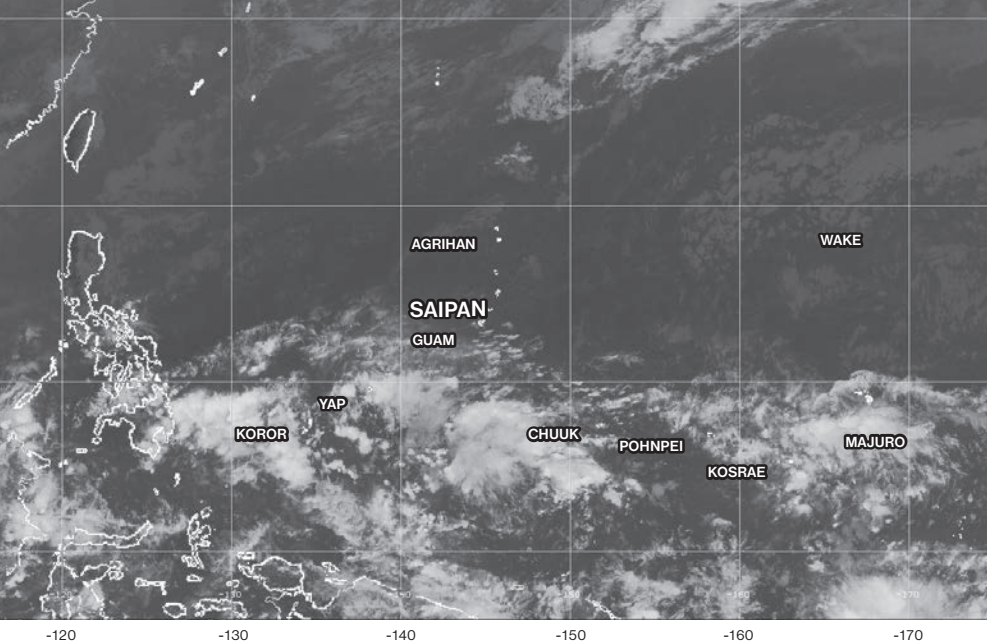
If the government evaluates the need for help by the number of veterans who ask for help, they will continue to draw the wrong conclusions. Signing up to serve in the first place was the moment the service member raised her hand to say, "I need support right now, as I'm learning how to protect and serve this nation, and I will need support later, after I have given myself, body and soul, to this nation."

The long-term solution to this problem is simple enough: stop making war. Stop sending high school graduates into battle. Stop ending lives before they begin. The short-term solution is to provide accessible, effective mental health care to all returning combat veterans, no matter where they are in the world. We should not ask veterans to make sacrifices that result in moral injury unless we're willing to help heal that moral injury, however—and wherever—it appears.

The need for mental health care is borne of the actions we ask our service members to take during war. Until we can stop engaging in war altogether, it's our duty to make that mental health care convenient, accessible, affordable and effective. If we don't, the wounds of war will continue to negatively impact our service members, families, communities and the strength of our nation for generations to come.

The Weather

| 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|--|-----|
| TODAY | | TUESDAY | | WEDNESDAY | | THURSDAY | | FRIDAY | |
|  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph. | | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph. | | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | | Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. | | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | |
| 88° | 77° | 86° | 77° | 87° | 77° | 86° | 76° | 86° | 77° |
| YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE | | | | | | | | | |



PICTURE TIME: 8:27 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

The Guam weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas waters. The radar`s VAD wind profile indicates winds from the east-northeast at 10 to 15 knots which build to 20 to 30 knots between 2 thousand and 17 thousand feet, then diminish a bit above that. The buoys reveal combined seas of 5 to 8 feet, composed mainly of trade-wind waves and swells, all from the northeast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

| MICRONESIA | | | ▲▼°F |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|------|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 86° / 77° | |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 85° / 77° | |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 87° / 79° | |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 85° / 79° | |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 87° / 77° | |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 85° / 81° | |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 86° / 81° | |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | | ▲▼°F |
|------------------|---------------|-----------|------|
| Auckland | Rain | 70° / 61° | |
| Beijing | Partly Cloudy | 43° / 21° | |
| Hong Kong | Partly Cloudy | 75° / 68° | |
| Honolulu | Windy | 82° / 72° | |
| London | Showers | 48° / 41° | |
| Los Angeles | Mostly Sunny | 68° / 46° | |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy | 90° / 79° | |
| Melbourne | Mostly Sunny | 90° / 63° | |
| Miami | Thunderstorms | 79° / 71° | |
| New York | Showers | 49° / 47° | |
| Osaka | Partly Cloudy | 59° / 43° | |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 46° / 46° | |
| Busan | Sunny | 54° / 41° | |
| Rome | Partly Cloudy | 57° / 43° | |
| Salem | Partly Cloudy | 53° / 48° | |
| San Francisco | Showers | 56° / 49° | |
| Seoul | Rain | 52° / 34° | |
| Tokyo | Showers | 61° / 48° | |
| Washington, DC | Showers | 45° / 43° | |



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | | FEET |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------|------|
| 4:16 AM | LOW TIDE | -0.58 | |
| 11:37 AM | HIGH TIDE | 1.77 | |
| 5:10 PM | LOW TIDE | 1.12 | |
| 9:34 PM | HIGH TIDE | 1.61 | |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:35 AM | 5:49 PM |
| Tuesday | 6:35 AM | 5:49 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:36 AM | 5:50 PM |
| Thursday | 6:36 AM | 5:50 PM |
| Friday | 6:37 AM | 5:51 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Today | - | 10:01 AM | 9:45 PM |
| Tuesday | - | 10:52 AM | 10:45 PM |
| Wednesday | - | 11:40 AM | 11:43 PM |
| Thursday | - | - | 12:25 PM |
| Friday | 12:40 AM | 1:08 PM | - |

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

| FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019 | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| DEPARTURES | | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117 | 9:15am | 9:55am | Daily | | UA174 | 7:30am | 8:11am | Daily |
| UA105 | 6:20pm | 7:00pm | 2, 4, 6 | | UA104 | 4:45pm | 5:26pm | 2, 4, 6 |
| SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) | | | | | NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN | | | |
| SKY811 | 10:15am | 3:00pm | Daily | | SKY816 | 4:35pm | 7:30pm | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 |
| | | | | | SKY816 | 5:05pm | 8:00pm | 6 |
| SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) | | | | | BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 7C3451 | 3:20am | 6:30am | Daily | | 7C3452 | 9:35pm | 2:30am+1 | 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| | | | | | 7C3452 | 10:05pm | 2:30am+1 | 3 |
| SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) | | | | | SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| TW308 | 2:05am | 6:05am | Daily | | OZ6233 | 8:00am | 1:20pm | 2, 4, 6 |
| OZ626 | 2:10am | 6:05am | 1 | | OZ623 | 8:55am | 2:30pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 |
| OZ626 | 2:50am | 6:25am | 3, 7 | | 7C3402 | 10:10am | 3:30pm | Daily |
| OZ626 | 2:50am | 6:40am | 2, 4, 5, 6 | | TW309 | 11:10am | 4:25pm | Daily |
| 7C3403 | 4:35am | 8:35am | Daily | | OZ625 | 7:30pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 |
| OZ6243 | 3:20pm | 7:10pm | 2, 4, 6 | | TW307 | 7:45pm | 1:05am+1 | Daily |
| OZ624 | 3:50pm | 7:40pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 | | OZ625 | 8:20pm | 1:40am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| 7C3401 | 4:30pm | 8:25pm | Daily | | 7C3404 | 10:10pm | 3:40am+1 | Daily |
| TW310 | 5:25pm | 10:15pm | Daily | | | | | |
| SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) | | | | | SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 3U8648 | 6:10am | 8:50am | 4, 7 | | 3U8647 | 10:30pm | 4:30am+1 | 3, 6 |
| SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH) | | | | | HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN | | | |
| JD396 | 7:30am | 12:05pm | 1 | | JD395 | 8:05am | 3:30pm | 4 |
| JD396 | 4:50pm | 7:55pm | 4 | | JD395 | 8:50pm | 5:00am+1 | 7 |
| SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) | | | | | BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN | | | |
| MU764 | 1:30am | 6:00am | 3, 5, 7 | | MU763 | 4:50pm | 12:30am+1 | 2, 4, 6 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) | | | | | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN | | | |
| OZ626/701 | 2:10am | 10:35am | 1 via ICN | | UA184/174 | 12:40am | 8:11am+1 | 3, 6 via GUM |
| OZ626/701 | 2:50am | 10:35am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN | | OZ702/625 | 12:05pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 via ICN |
| UA117/183 | 9:15am | 9:50pm | Daily via GUM | | OZ702/625 | 12:05pm | 1:40am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN |
| UA117/193 | 9:15am | 11:50pm | 2, 5 via GUM-ROR | | UA192/174 | 10:40pm | 8:11am+1 | 2, 5 via GUM-ROR |
| UA156/183 | 6:20pm | 9:50pm | 2, 4, 6 via GUM | | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 8:11am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM |
| UA156/193 | 6:20pm | 11:50pm | 2 via GUM-ROR | | OZ704/6233 | 11:45pm | 1:20pm+1 | 1, 3, 5 via ICN |
| | | | | | OZ704/623 | 11:45pm | 2:30pm+1 | 2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN |
| SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) | | | | | HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN | | | |
| OZ626/721 | 2:10am | 11:50am | 1 via ICN | | OZ746/6233 | 12:35am | 1:20pm | 2, 4, 6 via ICN |
| OZ626/721 | 2:50am | 11:50am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN | | OZ746/623 | 12:35am | 2:30pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN |
| UO43 | 5:40am | 8:40am | 1, 3, 5, 7 | | OZ722/625 | 1:15pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 via ICN |
| OZ6243/9661 | 3:20pm | 11:15pm | 2, 4, 6 via ICN | | OZ722/625 | 1:15pm | 1:40am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN |
| OZ624/9661 | 3:50pm | 11:15pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN | | UO42 | 6:50pm | 1:45am+1 | 7 |
| | | | | | UO42 | 9:30pm | 4:25am+1 | 2, 4, 6 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1301 | 7:30AM | 8:00AM | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:30AM | 12:00PM | Daily |
| 1303 | 4:00PM | 4:30PM | Daily |

ROTA TO SAIPAN

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 3101 | 8:15AM | 8:45AM | Daily |
| 3102 | 1:45PM | 2:15PM | Daily |
| 3103 | 4:45PM | 5:15PM | Daily |

ROTA TO GUAM

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 3401 | 12:15PM | 12:45PM | Daily |

GUAM TO ROTA

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 4301 | 1:00PM | 1:30PM | Daily |

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1201 | 7:00AM | 7:15AM | Daily |
| 1202 | 8:00AM | 8:15AM | Daily |

| | | | |
|------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1203 | 9:00AM | 9:15AM | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00AM | 10:15AM | Daily |
| 1205 | 11:00AM | 11:15AM | Daily |
| 1206 | 12:00PM | 12:15PM | Daily |
| 1207 | 1:00PM | 1:15PM | Daily |
| 1208 | 2:00PM | 2:15PM | Daily |
| 1209 | 3:00PM | 3:15PM | Daily |
| 1210 | 4:00PM | 4:15PM | Daily |
| 1211 | 5:00PM | 5:15PM | Daily |
| 1212 | 6:00PM | 6:15PM | Daily |

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 2102 | 7:30AM | 7:45AM | Daily |
| 2103 | 8:30AM | 8:45AM | Daily |
| 2104 | 9:30AM | 9:45AM | Daily |
| 2105 | 10:30AM | 10:45AM | Daily |
| 2106 | 11:30AM | 11:45AM | Daily |
| 2107 | 12:30PM | 12:45PM | Daily |
| 2108 | 1:30PM | 1:45PM | Daily |
| 2109 | 2:30PM | 2:45PM | Daily |
| 2110 | 3:30PM | 3:45PM | Daily |
| 2111 | 4:30PM | 4:45PM | Daily |
| 2112 | 5:30PM | 5:45PM | Daily |
| 2113 | 6:30PM | 6:45PM | Daily |

Fruit makes successful comeback in CNMI Got Talent



PHOTOS BY KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

Soccer freestyler Joel Fruit displays his skill with a soccer ball in a performance that won him the top prize at the 9th CNMI Got Talent last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club.

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Soccer freestyler Joel Fruit made a triumphant return to the annual CNMI Got Talent last Saturday in a performance that beat out nine other contestants and earned him the grand prize in the 9th edition of the competition.

Fruit, 21, who participated in the talent competition back in 2017, returned for a second shot to improve on his performance from two years ago.

Although his act was the same as the last time—juggling a soccer ball without the use of his hands—for this year Fruit put more effort into his act, his appearance, and in engaging the audience.

“I took it much more seriously this time around. This time I really focused on my preparation and I added messing around with the piano at the start so I guess it was really preparation. In 2017, my preparation was much worse like, for example, I just wore a T-shirt and I didn’t think about what I was going to do. It was more of me freestyling it,” he said.

This year, Fruit’s preparation started two weeks before the actual competition. “I’m so happy and I wasn’t expecting it all. I was just so happy when they called my name,” he said.

Fruit said he couldn’t have succeeded without the help he got from his mother. “My mom has always been so supportive of me and always does so much for me...,” he said.

First-runner up Angelo Rabe, who sang *Oh Holy Night*, feels immense gratitude after being named first runner-up winner, knowing that all of the other contestants also did really well.

“I devoted at least an hour per day for week to perfect my piece. Since I have full knowledge of utilizing my voice in classical music, I infused it with a pop Christmas song to give it a twist,” he said.

Rabe said he joined CNMI Got Talent because he wanted to share his talent and love for classical music and the art of singing.

“I have been practicing classical music since I was in elementary. I started as a boy-soprano before being a baritone. I had a clearer grasp of classical music when I entered college and joined our college choir,” he said.

The other winners of the night were Scene 10 who took second runner-up honors; Hyung Joo Kim, who took third runner-up honors; Donito Santiago, who won fourth runner-up, and The Little Santa Groovers, who took home the Governor’s Choice award.



Hyung Joo Kim, center, receives her prize from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Bridge Capital LLC officials after winning third runner-up honors at the 9th CNMI Got Talent last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club.



Members of Scene 10 celebrate after being awarded second runner-up honors at the 9th CNMI Got Talent last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club. Others in the photo are Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Bridge Capital LLC officials



First-runner up Angelo Rabe, who sang *Oh Holy Night*, is presented his award by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Bridge Capital LLC officials at the end of the 9th CNMI Got Talent last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club.



Ralph DLG Torres, second from left, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, third from left, and Bridge Capital LLC officials present Joel Fruit, center, with his prize after he won first place in the annual CNMI Got Talent last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club.

Business

FOR 16TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

MileagePlus named best airline loyalty program

CHICAGO—For the 16th consecutive year, Global Traveler readers named United Airlines' MileagePlus program the Best Overall Frequent Flyer program in the industry. Global Traveler is a monthly publication with an audience of over half a million business and luxury travelers who vote in the Global Traveler Reader Survey to determine this award. MileagePlus has earned the top spot for loyalty programs since the survey's first year in 2004.

Readers also voted MileagePlus Best Frequent-Flyer Bonus Program for the seventh consecutive year. The airline's co-brand MileagePlus Club Card from Chase was voted Best Overall Credit Card Program and Best Credit Card Rewards Program for the eighth consecutive year. The United Explorer Card from Chase was named Best Frequent-Flyer Affinity Credit Card Redemptions in this year's survey.

"MileagePlus earning the Best Overall Frequent Flyer program for the 16th straight year is a sweet achievement for us, most importantly because it is voted on by members and frequent travelers around the world," said Luc Bondar, president of MileagePlus and vice president of loyalty at United. "This year we made a number of improvements to the MileagePlus program, including announcing that miles never expire, and we know these changes continue to make MileagePlus an award-winning program for our members."

This year, United made numerous enhancements to MileagePlus to make it a more rewarding loyalty program for members at each level. The airline announced that MileagePlus miles never expire, began offering discounted or free CLEAR memberships for members and introduced an industry leading way for Premier Platinum members and

above to manage upgrades with the introduction of PlusPoints. United and Star Alliance offer members more than 1,300 destinations for award travel, more than any other U.S. airline. MileagePlus members also have more ways to earn and use their miles than any other U.S. airline loyalty program including opportunities to use miles for once in a lifetime experiences through MileagePlus Exclusives and opportunities to redeem as low as 1,000 miles for eGift cards.

In 2019, United is focusing more than ever on its commitment to its customers, looking at every aspect of its business to ensure that the carrier keeps customers' best interests at the heart of its service. In addition to today's announcement, this year United:

- Announced that MileagePlus award miles will never expire

- Gave Economy customers a choice of complimentary snacks on domestic flights

- Made DIRECTV free for every customer on more than 200 aircraft

- Released a new version of the award-winning, most downloaded app in the airline industry

- Launched a new tool called ConnectionSaver, dedicated to improving the experience for customers with connecting flights

- Partnered with CLEAR on free or discounted memberships for MileagePlus members

- Announced PlusPoints, new upgrade benefits for MileagePlus Premier members

- And introduced products in its amenity kits made exclusively for the airline by luxury skincare line Sunday Riley

United's shared purpose is "Connecting People. Uniting the World." We are more focused than ever on our commitment to customers through a series of innovations and improvements designed to

help build a great experience: Every customer. Every flight. Every day. Together, United and United Express operate approximately 4,900 flights a day to 358 airports across five continents. In 2018, United and United Express operated more than 1.7 million flights carrying more than 158 million customers. United is proud to have the world's most comprehensive route network, including U.S. mainland hubs in Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, New York/Newark, San Francisco

and Washington, D.C. United operates 788 mainline aircraft and the airline's United Express carriers operate 560 regional aircraft. United is a founding member of Star Alliance, which provides service to 195 countries via 26 member airlines. For more information, visit united.com, follow @United on Twitter and Instagram or connect on Facebook. The common stock of United's parent, United Airlines Holdings, Inc., is traded on the Nasdaq under the symbol "UAL." (PR)

China welcomes preliminary deal in trade war it blames on US

BEIJING (AP)—China expressed cautious optimism Saturday about a first-step trade agreement that dials down a trade war it blames the U.S. for starting.

Chinese experts and news media joined government officials in saying the deal would reduce uncertainty for companies, at least in the short term. They remained cautious, saying both sides will have to show a willingness to compromise to resolve the more fundamental differences between them.

"It at least stabilizes the situation and lays a foundation for the next round of trade talks or canceling additional tariffs in the future," said Tu Xinquan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. "I cannot predict what achievement can be made during the future talks."

The two countries announced a "Phase 1" agreement Friday under which the U.S. will reduce tariffs and China will buy more U.S. farm products. Chinese officials said the nine-chapter text, which includes intellectual property, technology transfer, financial services and dispute settlement, has to undergo legal and translation review before it can be signed.

At a late night news conference in Beijing, timed to coincide with the U.S. morning, the officials said the United States would begin phasing out tariffs on Chinese imports, rather than continue to raise them. The deal was announced just two days before higher tariffs were set to kick in. China

would make similar tariff cuts, the officials said, but they gave no details.

China portrayed the agreement as in line with the opening up of its economy and the deepening of its economic reforms. Increased imports of high-quality products from the United States and elsewhere will "meet the growing needs of the people for a better life," said Wang Shouwen, a deputy commerce minister and trade negotiator.

Bai Ming, an economic expert described as being close to the commerce ministry, told the state-owned Global Times newspaper that the U.S. tariff cuts demonstrate a positive attitude.

"They are not showing enough of it, but it's an improvement," he was quoted as saying.

In a separate piece, the Global Times called the agreement a new beginning. It pointed to stock market gains in recent days as word of a possible deal emerged. The dispute between the world's two largest economies had rattled markets and depressed global growth.

"China and the U.S. have been locked in a trade war for about 20 months and neither side could overwhelm the other to recklessly impose its own will on the other," said the newspaper, which is known for its nationalistic views.

It added, though, that both countries are capable of prolonging the trade war, and that resolving their differences will require patient negotiations.

"Rome was not built in a day," it wrote.

Kiribati prepares for growing cruise market

Kiribati is preparing for an exciting year for in international cruise ship visitation in 2020 following the latest confirmation from the MS *Hanseatic* to include the island of Abemama in the Gilbert islands in its November itinerary.

Likewise, Kanton, in the Phoenix island is also scheduled to host its first cruise ship in a while when it welcomes the MS *Europa* in March 2020. *Phoenix* is home to the Phoenix Island Protected Area, the world's largest Marine Protected Area and is currently only available to researchers and a handful of anglers.

Other cruise liners scheduled to call into Kiribati include the MS *Oosterdam*, MS *Maasdam*, and the MS *Rotterdam* and their stops include Kiritimati (Christmas Island) in the Line islands, and Butaritari and Abemama in the Gilbert islands.

To prepare the islands for these visits, the Tourism Authority of Kiribati in collaboration with key stakeholders will begin product development, tour guiding, and other tourism business and hospitality training as part of its cruise preparedness programme.

Tourism Authority of Kiribati CEO Petero Manufolau says that "medium to large ship cruise have the potential



The NCL Cruise ship at London.

to frequent Kiribati due to the nation's geographic location between North America and the South Pacific and the undiscovered and ideal tropical settings each of the Kiribati islands offer."

These visits he adds will give the islanders the opportunity to share a part of their culture and traditional lifestyle with their visitors and help generate increased economic activity through the sale of handicraft and souvenir, tours and excursions.

The 33 islands of the Republic of Kiribati is situated in the heart of the Pacific where the equator and the international datelines meet. Kiribati is therefore the only country in the world to be positioned in all four hemispheres—northern, southern, eastern, and western

hemispheres.

Tarawa is home to the country's main international airport and is serviced by direct flights from Nadi, Fiji, Nauru, Funafuti, Tuvalu, Honiara, Solomon Islands, Majuro, Republic of Marshall Islands, and Brisbane, Australia.

Kiritimati or Christmas Is-

land on the eastern side of the country is serviced by a weekly flight from Nadi, Fiji and Honolulu, Hawaii.

Accommodation options include hotels, guesthouses, bungalows, and traditional buyas. Tarawa (South and North) and Kiritimati host most of the accommodation whilst the outer islands feature traditional community and council run rest homes and privately-run lodges.

Friendly and peaceful, Kiribati is for the traveler passionate about to discover and explore new destinations; one that enjoys an off the beaten track experience with the yearning to be fully immersed in the island's natural beauty, culture and its people.

For more information, please email us in info@kiribatitourism.gov.ki or visit www.kiribatitourism.gov.ki. (PR)



The Fanning cruise.

Nation

Trump impeachment vote underscores a harshly partisan era

WASHINGTON (AP)—This coming week's virtually certain House impeachment of President Donald Trump will underscore how Democrats and Republicans have morphed into fiercely divided camps since

lawmakers impeached President Bill Clinton.

Twenty-one years ago this Thursday, a Republican-led House approved two impeachment articles against Democrat Clinton. While that battle



ACROSS THE NATION

Guatemalan cardinal to visit Mississippi after migrant raids

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—A Guatemalan cardinal who advocates for migrants will visit Mississippi following immigration raids last summer that prompted 680 arrests. The Rev. Roberto Mena, who pastors some Catholic churches in Mississippi affected by the raids, announced the visit Saturday. Pope Francis raised Alvaro Ramazzini to the rank of cardinal in October. He's the bishop of Huehuetenango in Guatemala, a region of that Central American country that has sent many migrants to the U.S. Ramazzini has spoken out for decades against exploitation of poor rural people in regions he has ministered to. A majority of those arrested in the raids at seven Mississippi chicken processing plants in August was Guatemalan, with some speaking Mayan dialects instead of Spanish. Of those arrested, at least 119 have been charged criminally, while others are jailed in Louisiana and Mississippi awaiting deportation proceedings. The raids were the largest conducted at American workplaces in at least a decade, and have brought scrutiny of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, especially because some children came home from school to find their parents gone. Mena says Ramazzini is "coming to be present" with affected families. He is scheduled to meet with Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson, Mississippi, in addition to lawyers and immigrant families. The cardinal also has scheduled a visit to a detention center in Louisiana.

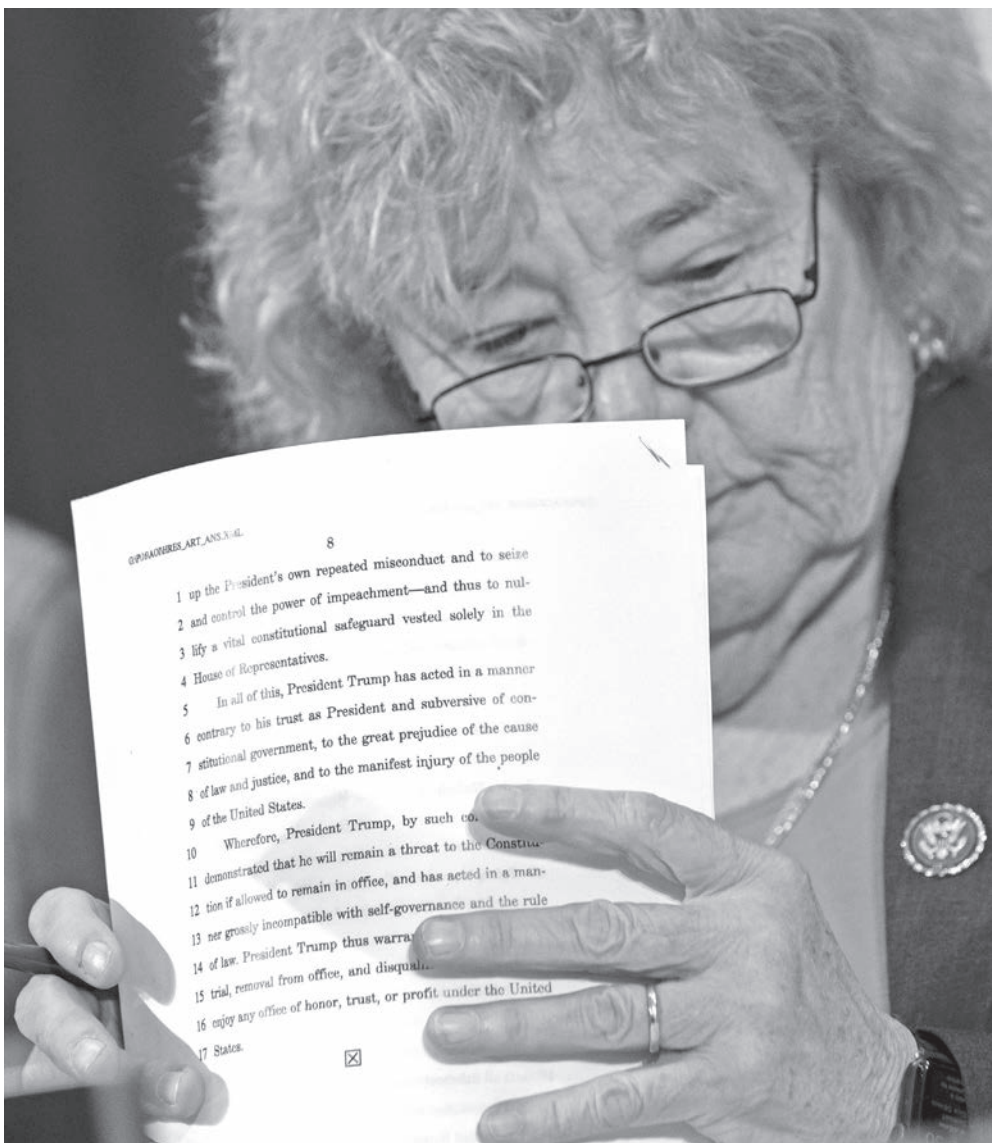
Possible 'white power' hand signs at Army-Navy game probed

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The Army and Navy academies are looking into hand signs flashed by students that can be associated with "white power" and were televised during the Army-Navy football game on Saturday, school officials said. Cadets at West Point and midshipmen at the Naval Academy in the stands both appeared to display the

sign during the broadcast, officials with the two military academies told The Wall Street Journal. The gesture was seen during an ESPN broadcast segment. School officials are trying to determine what the hand signals were meant to convey, they said. "We're looking into it," Lt. Col. Chris Ophardt, a spokesperson for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in New York, told the Journal. "I don't know what their intention is." "We are aware and will be looking into it," said Cmdr. Alana Garas, a spokesperson for the U.S. Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland.

FBI recovers van it says may be linked to Jersey City attack

ORANGE, N.J. (AP)—Federal authorities have recovered a van that may be connected to the Jersey City shootings that killed four people and are now being investigated as domestic terrorism, the FBI said Saturday. The white van recovered Saturday morning in Orange, New Jersey, about 11 miles (17 kilometers) northwest of Jersey City, is being examined for any evidence related to the attack, the FBI said in a news release. A man and woman killed a police officer near a cemetery, three people in a kosher supermarket and then died in an hourslong gun battle with police Tuesday, authorities say. It was not clear how the van may be linked to the attack, and authorities did not release further details. Police in Ramapo, New York, close to New Jersey's northern border, had earlier said that FBI officials had told them they were trying to locate a white van in connection with Tuesday's events. People were urged not to approach the vehicle if it was spotted but to immediately contact local law enforcement authorities. New Jersey's attorney general said Thursday that the attackers were driven by hatred of Jews and law enforcement. The two were armed with a variety of weapons, including an AR-15-style rifle and a shotgun, and a pipe bomb was also found in a stolen U-Haul van — a vehicle different from the white van recovered Saturday.



AP
Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., looks over the resolution as the House Judiciary Committee approves two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, Friday, Dec. 13, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

conscience, you could say you looked at it and didn't think this was the way to go."

In the upcoming votes on impeaching Trump, Democrats expect support from all but a few — two to perhaps five — of their members. Republican leaders envision no GOP desertions.

Underscoring the intensity of the partisanship, Rep. Jeff Van Drew of New Jersey, one of the Democrats planning to oppose impeachment, intends to switch parties and join the GOP. That's according to a Republican official who said top House Republicans have been told of Van Drew's plans and described the conversations on condition of anonymity.

Few defections are expected by either party when the GOP-run Senate holds a trial, probably in January, on whether to oust Trump from office. No one expects Democrats to muster the two-thirds Senate majority needed for removal over charges that he leveraged U.S. military aid and a White House meeting coveted by Ukrainian leaders to pressure them to announce investigations of his Democratic political foes.

was bitterly partisan, it was blurrier than the near party-line votes expected this week when the House, now run by Democrats, is poised to impeach Republican Trump.

Two of the four Clinton impeachment articles were killed—something party

leaders today would jump through hoops to avoid for fear of highlighting divisions. All four Clinton articles drew GOP opposition, peaking at 81 on one vote. That's an unthinkable number of defections today.

"Obviously it was partisan,

but it wasn't as intensely partisan as today is," said Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., one of four Republicans who opposed all the Clinton impeachment articles and the last remaining member of that group in Congress. "So you could basically argue

Shooting at suburban Atlanta mall injures 1 as shoppers flee

ATLANTA (AP)—A shooting that wounded one man in a mall food court sent suburban Atlanta shoppers fleeing in panic Saturday.

The Cobb County Police Department said in a statement that the man was wounded at Cumberland Mall around 1 p.m. following an argument and that the shooting suspect ran away. The victim was taken to a hospital, where Cobb County Police spokeswoman Ofc. Sarah O'Hara said he was in surgery and "expected to survive his injuries."

Police said they have identified a suspect and are looking for him, but O'Hara provided no further details.

Three witnesses told The Associated Press they saw a man bleeding on the floor of the mall's food court after shots were heard. None of the witnesses would identify themselves.

Videos posted online showed people with shopping bags running in all directions

from the food court, with some hiding under counters and tables. Shoppers reported that store employees in some cases told them to hide in stockrooms. Police, upon arriving, evacuated people who were found hiding.

Zyon Davis told WGCL-TV that he was shopping in a sporting goods store when he overheard two men arguing loudly at a deli in the food court. Davis said one of the men then drew a gun.

"You heard the gunshots, probably two or three shots," Davis said.

In the aftermath, Davis said some people pushed and shoved others to the ground as they ran.

"It was very chaotic," Davis said. "Everybody was running everywhere. Everything was a mess."

O'Hara said multiple shoppers were examined by paramedics because of panic attacks, while several pregnant women also sought examina-

tions. She said a motorcycle officer was struck by another vehicle while coming to the mall, but was treated for minor injuries and released.

Police said in statements that the shooting was "an isolated incident," calling it a dispute between people who knew each other and "not an active shooter event." Police added that the original supervisor who arrived at the mall, "out of an abundance of caution," described the scene as an active shooter incident, meaning a gunman targeting numbers of people in a public place.

Jammal Jones, a 29-year-old Atlanta resident, said he was with his girlfriend eating in the food court when he saw the fight break out.

"You could tell somebody was like fighting. You could hear the sneakers. You could hear them screeching like on the basketball courts," Jones said, adding he ducked for cover when the gun went off. He described a scene of chaos with

people running after the fight broke out and then the gunfire.

"Everybody running and got out of there quick," he said. "...It was just like, wow, that's crazy. I usually watch this sort of thing on YouTube and there it is happening in front of you."

The mall was closed for a time Saturday afternoon following the shooting, but later reopened. O'Hara said shoppers left behind "copious amounts of items" while running away, urging people to claim them.

Cumberland Mall, in suburban Cobb County, is owned by Brookfield Properties, which manages more than 170 shopping centers across the United States. The mall has more than 1 million square feet (92,000 square meters) of retail space and is anchored by Macy's and Costco. It's in a busy suburban business district, near where major league baseball's Atlanta Braves play in their new stadium.

Asia

North Korea says new tests will help it counter US threats

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said it successfully performed another “crucial test” at its long-range rocket launch site that will further strengthen its nuclear deterrent.

The test—the second at the facility in a week, according to North Korea’s Academy of Defense Science—possibly involved technologies to improve intercontinental ballistic missiles that could potentially reach the continental United States.

Pak Jong Chon, chief of the Korean People’s Army’s general staff, asserted on Saturday that North Korea has built up “tremendous power” and that the findings from the recent tests would be used to develop new weapons to allow the country to “definitely and reliably” counter U.S. nuclear threats.

The North in recent weeks has been dialing up pressure to coax major concessions from the Trump administration as it approaches an end-of-year deadline set by leader Kim Jong Un to salvage faltering nuclear negotiations.

The Academy of Defense Science did not specify what was tested on Friday. Just days earlier, the North said it conducted a “very important test” at the site on the country’s northwestern coast, prompting speculation that it involved a new engine for either an ICBM or a space launch vehicle.

The testing activity and defiant statements suggest that the North is preparing to do something to provoke the



Protesters tear mock North Korean flags during a rally to denounce policies of South Korean President Moon Jae-in on North Korea near the U.S. embassy in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Dec. 13, 2019.

United States if Washington doesn’t back down and make concessions to ease sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang in deadlocked nuclear negotiations.

Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, was to arrive in Seoul on Sunday for discussions with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and other officials. It was unclear whether Biegun would attempt contact with North Korean officials at the inter-Korean border, which

has often been used as a diplomatic venue, or whether such an effort would be successful.

“Genuine peace can be safeguarded and our development and future be guaranteed only when the balance of power is completely ensured. We have stored up a tremendous power,” Pak said in a statement carried by the North’s official Korean Central News Agency.

“We should be ready to cope with political and military provocations of the hostile forces and be familiar with

both dialogue and confrontation,” Pak said. “Our army is fully ready to thoroughly carry out any decision of the supreme leader with action. ... U.S. and other hostile forces will spend the year-end in peace only when they hold off any words and deeds rattling us.”

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military officer and currently an analyst from Seoul’s Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said the North mentioning its nuclear deterrent makes it clear it tested a new engine for an ICBM, not

a satellite-launch vehicle. Kim said it was notable that North Korea announced the specific length of the test, which he said possibly signals a more advanced design for a liquid-fuel multistage ICBM that can carry larger payloads with more stability.

North Korea’s current ICBMs, including the Hwasong-15, are built with first stages that are powered by a pair of engines that experts say are modeled after Russian designs. When the North first tested the engine in 2016,

it said the test lasted for 200 seconds and demonstrated a thrust of 80 tons-force.

During a provocative run of weapons tests in 2017, Kim Jong Un conducted three flight tests of ICBMs that demonstrated potential range to reach deep into the U.S. mainland, raising tensions and triggering verbal warfare with President Donald Trump as they exchanged crude insults and threats of nuclear annihilation.

Experts say that the North would need further tests to establish the missile’s performance and reliability, such as improving its accuracy and ensuring that the warheads survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric reentry.

Relations between Kim and Trump became cozier in 2018 after Kim initiated diplomacy that led to their first summit in June that year in Singapore, where they issued a vague statement on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, without describing when or how it would occur.

But negotiations faltered after the United States rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North’s nuclear capabilities at Kim’s second summit with Trump in Vietnam in February.

Trump and Kim met for a third time in June at the border between North and South Korea and agreed to resume talks. But an October working-level meeting in Sweden broke down over what the North Koreans described as the Americans’ “old stance and attitude.”

Japan PM postpones trip to India’s violence-hit northeast

GAUHATI, India (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Friday postponed traveling for a summit with India’s leader in the violence-racked northeast, where two people have been killed in ongoing protests over a new law that grants citizenship based on religion and excludes Muslims.

Nearly 10,000 protesters held a day-long hunger strike on Friday in Gauhati, the capital of India’s northeastern state of Assam, the morning after rioters defied an overnight curfew and police fatally shot two demonstrators and injured 24 others.

Abe was scheduled to travel to Assam and Manipur states on Sunday for a three-day trip to discuss security and economic ties with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“Both sides have decided to defer the visit,” Indian Exter-

nal Affairs Ministry spokesman Raveesh Kumar said in a statement.

In Tokyo, government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said Abe “has decided to postpone the trip after discussions with the governments of both countries in response to a report from the Indian side regarding the local situation.”

Suga said Japan and India have been holding annual visits by the two leaders and will decide on Abe’s trip to India “at an appropriate time convenient for both sides.”

Violence in Assam has been raging since late Wednesday, when India’s upper house of Parliament passed the citizenship bill.

Indian police had to escort an advance team of Japanese security officials to their hotel on Thursday as protesters uprooted telephone poles, set buses and other vehicles on

fire and attacked homes of officials from Modi’s governing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Authorities relaxed the curfew for six hours on Friday in parts of Assam but shut down schools until next week.

The protesters in Assam oppose the legislation out of concern that migrants will move to the border region and dilute the culture and political sway of those who already live there.

The new citizenship act, which the ceremonial president signed into law late Thursday, will grant Indian nationality to Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Parsis and Sikhs who fled Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh because of religious persecution before 2015. It does not, however, extend to Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled persecution in Myanmar.

US Pacific commander says China seeks to intimidate region

BANGKOK (AP)—China’s activities in territory it claims in the South China Sea are meant to intimidate other nations in the region, the commander of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific Fleet said Friday.

Adm. John Aquilino said China’s actions, including constructing islands in the disputed waters, are intended to project its military capacity.

He told journalists at a briefing in the Thai capital Bangkok that in addition to installing anti-aircraft and anti-ship missile systems and radar jamming equipment, China has recently landed bombers on runways on some of the man-made islands it built atop coral reefs and lagoons that dot one of the world’s busiest waterways.

He said it was clear that such installations “absolutely have military purpose in order to present an optic to partners

and nations in the region that show military strength and ultimately coerce and bully the nations in the region.”

China’s vast territorial claims, far beyond its shores, have been challenged by other claimants, including Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia. About \$3 trillion worth of trade passes each year through the South China Sea, and it is abundant with natural resources, said Aquilino.

He called for China to “adhere to the international rights of all, in accordance with international law, as recognized by all nations in the region,” and to respect that other countries can exercise their own rights in the South China Sea.

The U.S. regularly runs naval and air patrols through the disputed areas to assert the right of unimpeded passage.

Aquilino said he sees the

role of the U.S. is to “keep the nations and the region secure” in close cooperation with its allies “who share same values.”

“There’s no doubt that the U.S. has stated that we are in competition with the People’s Republic of China. We have inherent disagreements between ideologies,” Aquilino said. He added, however that the competition was not a conflict.

“The U.S. will cooperate where we can, and we’ll compete where we must,” he said.

China has criticized what it calls U.S. interference in the Asia-Pacific region and insists it has sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea based on historical grounds. It has refused to respect an international arbitration ruling in a case filed by the Philippines that invalidated most of its territorial claims.

World

Boris Johnson goes north to celebrate crushing election win

LONDON (AP)—British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged Saturday to repay the trust of voters in the working-class heartland of northern England who rejected the Labour Party and helped give him an 80-seat majority in

Thursday's election.

Speaking to cheering supporters at a cricket club in Sedgefield—the constituency once held by Labour former prime minister Tony Blair—Johnson acknowledged the seismic shift that helped



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, gestures as he speaks to supporters on a visit to meet newly elected Conservative party MP for Sedgefield, Paul Howell, at Sedgefield Cricket Club in County Durham, north east England, Saturday Dec. 14, 2019, following his Conservative party's general election victory.

WORLD BRIEFS

Rebel attack on eastern Congo city leaves at least 6 dead

BENI, Congo (AP)—Rebels again attacked a city at the center of the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo, killing at least six people including a pregnant woman, witnesses and officials said Saturday. Meanwhile, Congolese health authorities said a spate of recent violence in the area has allowed the Ebola virus to spread further, a new setback in the 16-month outbreak. The new attack in Beni on Friday night came as Congo's military steps up its fight against armed groups including the Allied Democratic Forces rebels. They were blamed for the assault. Omar Kavota, president of a local human rights group known as CEPADHO, said the attack began around 8:30 p.m. A recent surge in such assaults has led some Beni residents to protest violently over the lack of protection for civilians. Last month residents burned the town hall and stormed the United Nations peacekeeping mission. Repeated attacks by ADF rebels and other armed groups also have disrupted health workers' efforts to contain Ebola, which has killed more than 2,200 people in this outbreak. Vaccination teams at times have been unable to reach those most at risk because of the threat of violence.

Greta Thunberg apologizes for 'against the wall' comment

MADRID (AP)—Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg has apologized for saying politicians should be put "against the wall" after critics took it to mean that she was advocating violence. The 16-year-old Swede made the comment in a speech to young activists in the Italian city of Turin on Friday. Thunberg later said she was making a literal translation from Swedish, in which the expression means to put someone on the spot with tough questions. "That's what happens when you improvise speeches in a second language. But of course I apologise if anyone misunderstood this," Thunberg wrote

on Twitter on Saturday. Thunberg told the crowd in Turin that world leaders were running away from their responsibilities to fight climate change. "We have to make sure that they cannot do that," she said. "We will make sure they, that we put them against the wall, and that they will have to do their job and to protect our futures." The expression "putting someone against the wall" in Swedish describes a situation when someone is forced to address difficult questions or a difficult situation.

Disagreement drags UN climate talks into a 2nd extra day

MADRID (AP)—U.N. climate talks in Madrid dragged into a second day of extra time Sunday, with officials from almost 200 countries unable to break the deadlock on key points of difference. The chair of the meeting, Chilean Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt, told weary delegates to examine new agreements drafted by her team and meet at 1:30 a.m. (0030 GMT) for further talks. "This has been very tough, very long," she said as the talks entered their 14th day. Still, Schmidt said some progress had been made, adding that "things are coming together." Developing countries and environmental groups warned that the drafts circulated overnight Saturday risked undoing or stalling on commitments made in the 2015 Paris climate accord. "I've been attending these climate negotiations since they first started in 1991, but never have I seen the almost total disconnection we've seen here ... in Madrid between what the science requires and the people of the world demand, and what the climate negotiators are delivering," said Alden Meyer, a climate policy special at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Meyer said the current drafts didn't reflect urgent warnings from scientists that greenhouse gas emissions need to fall sharply, and soon. "The planet is on fire and our window of escape is getting harder and harder to reach the longer we fail to act," Meyer said.

sweep him to victory.

"I know that people may have been breaking the voting habits of generations to vote for us," he said. "And I want the people of the northeast to know that we in the Conservative Party and I will repay your trust."

In a victory speech outside 10 Downing Street on Friday, Johnson called for an end to the acrimony that has festered throughout the country since the 2016 Brexit referendum, and urged Britain to "let the

healing begin."

Johnson's campaign mantra to "get Brexit done" and widespread unease with the leadership style and socialist policies of opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn combined to give the ruling Conservatives 365 seats in the House of Commons, its best performance since party icon Margaret Thatcher's last victory in 1987. Labour slumped to 203 seats, its worst showing since 1935.

While Johnson was on a

victory lap, Corbyn—who has pledged to stand down next year—was under fire from within his own party, where there was little sign of healing.

Former lawmaker Helen Goodman, one of many Labour legislators to lose seats in northern England, told BBC radio that "the biggest factor was obviously the unpopularity of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader."

Another former Labour lawmaker criticized the election campaign as muddled.

Anna Turley told the BBC the party put forward an overwhelming number of policies and voters "just didn't believe we were the party that could deliver on any of it."

John McDonnell, Labour's finance spokesman, said Saturday he would stand down from the position when Corbyn is replaced.

"I've done my bit. We need to move on at that stage with that new leader," he told reporters.

Iraq's top Shiite cleric condemns gruesome hanging of teen

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's top Shiite cleric on Friday denounced the killing of a teenager whose body was strung up by his feet from a traffic pole in a Baghdad square, as conflicting versions emerged about what led to the 16-year-old's death.

Security officials initially told The Associated Press that he had been beaten to death by an angry mob after he killed four anti-government protesters and two shopkeepers in a shooting spree. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with briefing regulations, provided what they said were the names of four of those killed, saying they ranged in age from 18 to 31.

Spokespersons for the ministries of interior and health said Friday only that the teen had been killed. Interior Ministry spokesman Brig. Khaled al-Muhanna said an investi-

gation into the incident was underway.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the nation's top Shiite cleric, called the teen's killing a "horrific crime" that must not be repeated and urged Iraqi authorities to hold the perpetrators accountable.

In his weekly sermon, delivered by a representative, al-Sistani also condemned recent killings, kidnappings and assaults on protesters. He added that only the judiciary has the authority to inflict punishment on offenders of the law.

Officials in Iraq often provide conflicting accounts of the same incident, particularly in the context of Iraq's chaotic anti-government protests.

The eight-week-old protest movement began Oct. 1 when thousands took to the streets to decry government corruption, poor services and scarcity of jobs, has engulfed Iraq.

The demonstrations have

been marked by bloodshed and almost daily confrontations, with security forces firing live ammunition and tear gas at demonstrators. More than 450 people have been killed, most of them shot in the head and chest by security forces. More recently, a string of mysterious acts of bloodshed by unknown groups has put anti-government protesters and activists on edge and eroded their faith in the ability of state security forces to protect them.

On Thursday, a mob strung up the body of the 16-year-old in Baghdad's al-Wathba square as dozens pointed their cellphones at the gruesome scene.

Security officials initially said the teen had been wanted by police on drug-related charges and was running from security forces before opening fire and killing six people. Some videos circulating on social media showed him be-

ing beaten and dragged across the street.

However, other videos showed security forces with pointed guns surrounding a house where the teen apparently had taken cover, raising the possibility he may have been killed by police.

The U.N. Security Council issued a statement Friday stressing the right to peaceful assembly and calling on Iraqi authorities to promptly conduct transparent investigations into violence against demonstrators.

The U.N.'s most powerful body expressed "grave concern at the loss of life of those demonstrating and at the killing, maiming and arbitrary arrests of unarmed demonstrators." The council also expressed concern at the killing of security forces and "the involvement of armed groups in extrajudicial killings and kidnappings."

Health & Wellness

This advertorial
is sponsored by



Tan Siu Lin
Foundation



Unhappiness from social media, addictions a legacy of 2019

In March, the U.N. World Happiness Report set the tone on comprehending our plight, showing, through a complex formula, how happiness in the United States has dipped in recent years.

To illustrate the problems teens face, Holstein shared a video of a 13-year-old girl named Alyssa (her last name is withheld to protect her privacy).

“Cyberbullying,” Alyssa says in the video, “makes you keep all jumbled-up feelings inside and can ruin lives.”

She speaks of a friend who was the victim of “horrible” false stories told about her online by former friends. When the girl responded online by saying, “I thought we’d be friends forever,” her tormentors retorted, “Stop talking to us, clown trash.” The girl cried.

Beyond online complications, American happiness is also being thwarted because we are a “mass addictions society,” according to the U.N. report.

For complex reasons stemming from socioeconomic inequality and growing anxiety, among other things, Americans are indulging in drugs, alcohol, and food, and are spending too much time shopping. They’re even exercising more than is healthy.

Addictions “directly lower well-being ... (and) may also give rise to clinical depression,” the report concluded.

Statistics may bear out that somber diagnosis. Suicide in the U.S. increased 30% between 2000 and 2016; it was up 50% for girls and women in the same time frame, according to the American Psychological Association.

Perhaps as a result of people trying to self-medicate because of the unhappiness in their lives, experts say, drug overdose deaths increased by nearly 10% from 2016 to 2017 throughout America. Pennsylvania registered 44.3 deaths per 100,000, among the highest rates, figures for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show.

As the opioid crisis has advanced, news reports have shown that many drug deaths are related to drug manufacturers’ push for profits.

While unhappiness persists, there may be ways to cope, said psychologist Mary Mercer of Las Vegas, an expert on optimism.

“To be happy, what I advise people is to focus on their problems as not being permanent, and being fixable,” she said. “Optimistic people know this, and figure out ways to solve problems.”

Further, she said, the happiest people are those who don’t blame others for their difficulties. “Optimistic people take responsibility. It causes them to feel better.

“In the end, you’re not doomed to being depressed.”

By ALFRED LUBRANO
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

As 2019 recedes, it leaves behind a sobering legacy: Unhappiness continues to haunt Americans.

Social media tends to drain joy from teenagers and adults, both by stoking anxieties about the “better” lives others seem to be leading online and by robbing time we should be spending interacting with others in the real world.

Meanwhile, broad issues such as opioid addiction and the pursuit of money contribute to unhappiness.

In March, the U.N. World Happiness Report set the tone on comprehending our plight, showing, through a complex formula, how happiness in the United States has dipped in recent years.

Findings were based on numerous variables, such as economics, levels of political corruption, and survey questions, including, “If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends ... to help you?” Also, people were asked about feelings of enjoyment, worry, sadness and anger.

On a scale of one to three, American happiness slipped from a high of 2.28 in the 1980s to recent score of 2.16, according to the U.N. report. The U.S. is slotted as only the 19th-happiest country in the world, just after Belgium and right above the Czech Republic. The happiest is Finland; the least happy, No. 156, is South Sudan.

In unrelated WalletHub reports measuring happiness, Hawaii ranked first and West Virginia last. Among cities, No. 1 was Plano, Texas, while No. 182 was Detroit.

One of the traits that hurts Americans most is their quest for more money when they already have enough, said Jacksonville, Fla., psychologist Gary Buffone.

People in other countries say that once their basic needs are met, “any more money doesn’t help toward happiness,” Buffone said. “Excess can lead to unhappiness. Eating the extra piece of chocolate cake, looking for that high, doesn’t bring more happiness.

“Happiness comes from having good relationships with people, and a sense of purpose in life.”

Buffone cited a study showing that people making \$75,000 a year

won’t get any higher satisfaction from more money.

Happiness is elusive, but you need to search it out, according to Quintelina Lewis, 77, of Boothwyn, Pa., who has endured her share of woes.

“You have to find it within yourself to push to be happy,” said Lewis, an endometrial cancer survivor and a widow who has raised and continues to live with her four grandchildren, ages 18 to 21. The family lives on Social Security income and food stamps. “My house is a mess, I can’t keep up with what needs to be done, but I’ve always been upbeat, and I try to do the best I can with what I have,” she said. “I’ll get depressed sometimes, but I keep on truckin’.”

As optimistic as Lewis is, however, she’ll allow that one thing gets to her more than anything else: Facebook.

“Going online just adds to unhappiness,” she said. “Someone saying on Facebook they got new siding and windows on their house—I’d love that. But I can’t afford it.”

Beyond the envy factor, Facebook presents sad stories people must somehow absorb, noted Burgandy Holiday, 41, a married Mount Airy therapist and mother of two.

“They set us up for the worst humanity has to offer,” she said. “And Facebook has this feedback loop that plays the horrible things in the world, and it circles and circles among us. We’re overconsuming this content that drives down our happiness.”

Life online proved difficult for Americans, especially teenagers.

On average, 12th graders in the U.S. spent six hours a day online in 2017, according to the U.N. report. This meant spending less time interacting with friends, socializing, going to parties, and even sleeping.

All that corresponds with growing teen unhappiness, the U.N. report concluded. Girls spending five or more hours a day on social media are three times more likely to be depressed than non-users.

“Bullying also is a factor of the dark side of social media that increases kids’ sadness,” noted Barbara Becker Holstein, a Long Branch, Pa., psychologist who works with teenagers.

“Kids are waiting for us adults to calm them down from the excesses of being online and give them feelings of purpose. Not everyone is sitting down together at dinner for 45 minutes, chatting and laughing.”

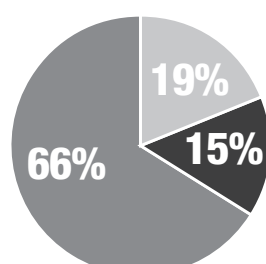
1 in 5 use health apps, trackers

Nineteen percent of Americans say they currently use a wearable fitness tracker, with the same percentage saying they currently use a mobile health app.

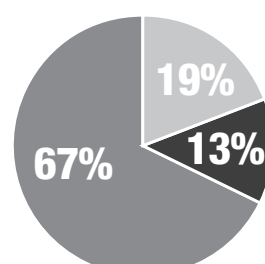
Yes Have done in past Never

Source: Gallup

Graphic: Staff, TNS



Do you wear a fitness tracker such as a Fitbit or smartwatch?



Do you track your health statistics using an app on your smartphone or tablet?



Life & Style

Impeachment saga is a quick TV moment after hours of talk

NEW YORK (AP)—For a few moments, most of the talking ceased, replaced by simple recitations of “aye” or “no.”

The House Judiciary Committee’s vote Friday on two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump made for a short and solemn television show, in contrast to hours of debate that stretched over two days and ended in rancor near midnight Thursday.

The cable news and broadcast networks all covered the blink-if-you-miss-it moment live Friday, although they had to hustle: Voting was underway before ABC broke in, for example. It all took less than 10 minutes.

“The vote was quick, the results consequential,” CNN’s John King said.

The coverage reflected the nation’s partisan divide over impeachment.

President Bill Clinton’s impeachment in 1998 “seemed to capture the imagination of the country. Everyone was paying attention to it. You don’t get that sense today,” said Bill Hemmer, appointed this week as Fox News Channel’s chief news anchor.

Meanwhile, CNN’s Dana Bash was awed by the decorum and sense of history. On MSNBC, commentator Eddie Glaude said the vote represented “the death rattle of the Republican Party.”

“This is the moment,” Glaude said. “I think I’m hearing the last breath.”

Fox’s Hemmer interviewed Michigan Rep. Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat who said she hasn’t made up her mind on an impeachment vote. She characterized her constituents as “definitely engaged” on the issue, so much so that her district office had to add another phone line to handle the calls of people who wanted their opinions heard.

Hemmer pointed out that Slotkin, a former CIA analyst, won her election by 3 percentage points in a district carried by Trump by 7 points in 2016, and asked if she would lose next year if she voted for impeachment.

“If this is the end of my political career, at least I’m doing what I think is right, and I’m basing my decision on integrity,” Slotkin said. “That’s the most I can do.”



House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., speaks from the podium after the House Judiciary Committee approved the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, Friday, Dec. 13, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

Hemmer said that, “I’m trying to read your mind. That last answer sounds like a ‘no.’”

Slotkin cautioned him against such an interpretation, saying she would look at the evidence over the weekend and decide Monday. Hemmer went on to ask her whether she thought the punishment of impeachment fit the accusa-

tions and to respond to Republican charges that the process was unfair.

“I do think there’s a focus on the process rather than the substance,” Slotkin said, “and I’m a substance person.”

Friday’s vote followed two marathon days of discussion on the impeachment articles

that dominated coverage on the cable networks until ending abruptly late Thursday night. The Democratic majority said they didn’t want a vote when many Americans were sleeping; angry Republicans suggested they were playing to the cameras.

CNN aired the House de-

bate live for a longer period than rivals Fox News Channel and MSNBC, who seemed more reluctant to preempt their highly-rated lineups of opinion hosts. During the hearing, for example, Fox aired Sean Hannity’s interview with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell about the potential impeachment trial.

On Thursday, CNN aired 11 hours, 48 minutes of the impeachment discussion. MSNBC had 10 minutes, 39 seconds and Fox had 7 minutes, 35 seconds, according to an analysis by the liberal watchdog Media Matters for America.

Earlier in the week, CNN spent notably less time than its two competitors covering the Senate Judiciary Committee with testimony of the Justice Department inspector general about the FBI’s handling of the investigation into Russian election interference.

During daytime coverage of the impeachment discussion on Thursday, Fox News averaged 1.89 million viewers, MSNBC had 1.1 million and CNN had 959,000, the Nielsen company said.

Study shows hostility toward journalists by Trump fans

NEW YORK (AP)—It’s been true for some time that Republicans are generally more hostile to the news media than Democrats, but a study released Thursday found that’s much more the case for supporters of President Donald Trump.

The Pew Research Center study looks at viewpoints on the ethical standards of journalists and whether they act in the best interests of the public.

The study found that 17% of Republicans who somewhat approve of Trump’s performance said they believe journalists have very low ethical standards, and 12% of “never-Trump” Republicans felt that way. However, 40% of Republicans who strongly approve of Trump agree that reporters have very low ethical standards. Another 45% answered low, leaving out the “very,” the Pew study said.

Meanwhile, 4% of Democrats who cast themselves as strong opponents to the president said journalists have “very low” standards.

Twenty-three percent of Republicans who are lukewarm in their support of the president or oppose him say they

have a lot of trust in national news organizations, but that number sinks to 9% among strong backers. The survey found 33% of Democrats who strongly oppose Trump also strongly believe in news organizations.

Trump has crusaded against what he calls the “fake news” media throughout his presidency and regularly attacks organizations like CNN and The New York Times.

“The president’s attacks have done some damage,” Fox News anchor Chris Wallace said Wednesday at an event at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. He cited a Freedom Forum Institute poll this year where more than three-quarters of Americans said “fake news” is a serious threat to democracy.

“I believe President Trump is engaged in the most direct, sustained assault on freedom of the press in our history,” Wallace said.

There’s little difference in attitudes toward other professions—lawyers, religious leaders, police officers and doctors—between Trump-supporting Republicans and less supportive GOP mem-

bers, Pew found.

The study didn’t address the chicken-or-egg question of whether Trump supporters express these anti-press opinions because the president makes it a constant refrain or because they’re already predisposed to believe them.

“Those criticisms really do resonate with his most fervent supporters,” said Jeff Gottfried, Pew senior researcher.

The poll also didn’t cross-reference attitudes with media consumption habits, but it did find the partisan divide widened among people who say they have a high degree of political awareness. Pew found that 76% of people who say they are Democrats or lean in that direction have a great deal of confidence in the press, compared to 30% of Republicans. Among the highly aware, 91% of the Democrats surveyed have great confidence in the press, while only 16% of Republicans do.

“The ones who are most engaged with the news or politics are the ones who tend to be the most polarized,” Gottfried said.

It’s a scenario playing out on television screens all week with coverage of impeachment hearings and politicians speaking to different audiences more than each other.



Trump

Message of Appreciation

WE, THE FAMILY OF
†FRANCISCO
DE LEON GUERRERO
CABRERA

give our praise to God and rejoice that our loved one now rests in the love and peace of His embrace.

Words cannot adequately express our profound gratitude and sincere appreciation to all our friends and family for all the kind words of comfort and for taking the time to join us in the Celebration of the Eucharist in honor of our beloved †Francisco De Leon Guerrero Cabrera. Your prayers, love, support and condolences have helped us tremendously during this most difficult time, giving us courage and strength to accept the will of God no matter how painful and difficult.

Know that you are treasured in our hearts and will be remembered in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank you & Dangkulo na si Yirus Marase

The Family
May Reyes Cabrera/Family
Joaquin P. Villagomez/Family
Herman Blas Cabrera/Family



'Rise of Skywalker' is almost here, but a dark side looms

LOS ANGELES (AP)—When Disney bought Lucasfilm for more than \$4 billion in 2012, there were lofty expectations of reviving “Star Wars” in spectacular hyper-speed fashion with a new trilogy that continued the story of Luke Skywalker and other beloved characters.

The space saga has been a smart investment, starting with “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” which in 2015 became the fastest movie to

reach \$1 billion. Despite the financial success, there’s been a dark side—fierce criticism of the new trilogy amplified by social media.

Some fans have attacked the story lines, which have shifted away from Skywalker toward a new generation of characters. The new films are more inclusive and feature a diverse cast and a focus on a female protagonist, Daisy Ridley’s Rey, leading to volleys of racist and sexist remarks directed

at the franchise’s newest stars.

With “Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker” opening in theaters Dec. 20, director J.J. Abrams expects more backlash. Especially since the new film—which he calls the “aftermath of Luke Skywalker and his sister Princess Leia”—is the final installment of a nine-part movie series that began 42 years ago.

“There are some people who, in this age of outrage, need to be vitriolic and hurt-

ful, and that’s not right,” said Abrams, who returns after directing “The Force Awakens.” He co-wrote and directed “Rise of Skywalker” after handing over the reins to Rian Johnson for 2017’s “The Last Jedi,” a blockbuster that received mostly positive reviews from movie critics but remains divisive among hardcore fans.

Several thousand fans signed a petition for Disney to remake “The Last Jedi,”

which showed Luke Skywalker as a surly recluse disillusioned with his powers. Even Mark Hamill, who played Skywalker in five films, said it was tough for him to comprehend the story’s arc and see his character’s idealism fade. Johnson has said he received death threats from online trolls.

Abrams is a longtime “Star Wars” fan and understands fans are passionate. But he draws the line when comments attempt to demoralize the film’s cast or production, which he says is a cultural issue, not a “Star Wars” one.

“That in no way is a “Star Wars” phenomenon,” Abrams told The Associated Press. “That is a cultural phenomenon. If you’re not in the right political party, you’re against us. If you’re not doing exactly what they want, then you’re an abomination. It’s sort of par for the course in everything right now.”

Abrams said “Rise of Skywalker” is no way an apology for the previous film. The director said he’s not worried about potential backlash or feeling any pressure heading into the release.

“If you’re being crushed by a car and an elephant stands on the car, it’s irrelevant,” he said. “Like, it doesn’t matter.

There’s a point at which the insanity of what it means to be working on a ‘Star Wars’ movie blinds you. Anything past that threshold is just additional light, noise and weight. I know it’s a lot. But you have to embrace and accept the responsibility that you’ve got. You want people to laugh and cry. That emotion can’t come if you’re constantly looking over your shoulder of what the studio might feel or the logistics or what the fans are saying. All you can do is the best job you can.”

“Rise of Skywalker” faces galactic expectations. The filmmakers have promised it will be the conclusion of the Skywalker saga, a lineage that traces from Darth Vader through his grandson, the powerful Dark Side enforcer Kylo Ren.

“The Force Awakens” marked the first time the original trilogy’s characters, Han Solo, Luke Skywalker and his sister Leia, would return to the big screen, though the focus has now shifted to new characters.

Ridley said she doesn’t feel the weight of expectations mostly because she’s not on social media. However, she said she intends to shut her cellphone off when the film premieres.

Under pressure, Hallmark pulls gay-themed wedding ads

NEW YORK (AP)—Under pressure from a conservative advocacy group, The Hallmark Channel has pulled ads for a wedding-planning website that featured two brides kissing at the altar.

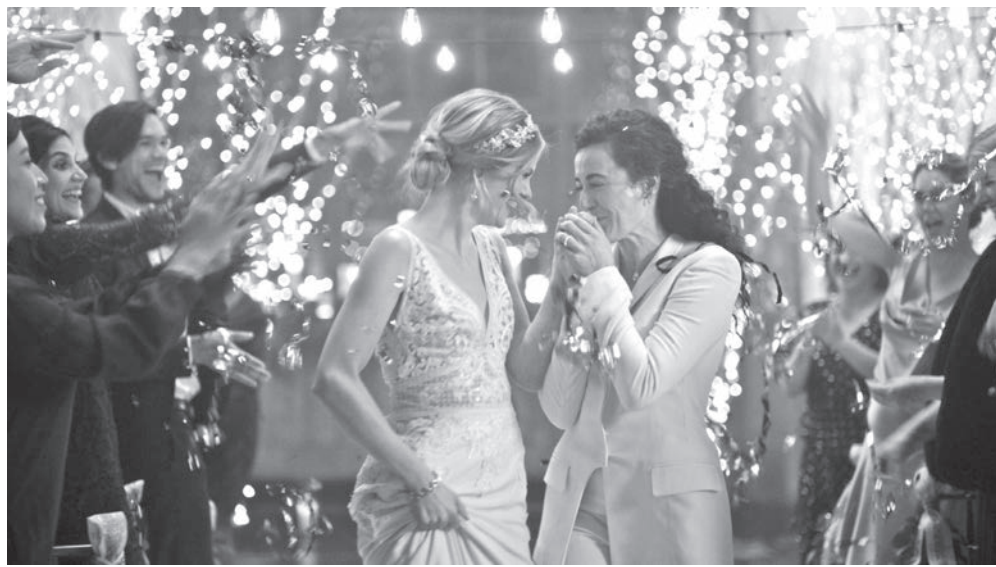
The family-friendly network, which is in the midst of its heavily watched holiday programming, removed the ads because the controversy was a distraction, a spokesperson said in an interview Saturday.

“The debate surrounding these commercials on all sides was distracting from the purpose of our network, which is to provide entertainment value,” said a statement provided by Molly Biwer, senior vice president for public affairs and communications at Hallmark.

In an interview, she added: “The Hallmark brand is never going to be divisive. We don’t want to generate controversy, we’ve tried very hard to stay out of it ... we just felt it was in the best interest of the brand to pull them and not continue to generate controversy.”

There was immediate criticism on Twitter. Ellen DeGeneres asked Hallmark: “Isn’t it almost 2020? What are you thinking? Please explain. We’re all ears.”

Biwer confirmed that a con-



This image made from undated video provided by Zola shows a scene of its advertisement.

AP

servative group, One Million Moms, part of the American Family Association, had complained about the ads to Bill Abbott, CEO of Crown Media Family Networks, Hallmark’s parent company.

A post on the group’s website said that Abbott “reported the advertisement aired in error.” The group also wrote: “The call to our office gave us the opportunity to confirm the Hallmark Channel will continue to be a safe and family-friendly network.”

Zola had submitted six ads, and four had a lesbian couple.

After Hallmark pulled those ads, but not two featuring only opposite-sex couples, Zola pulled its remaining ads, the company said.

“The only difference between the commercials that were flagged and the ones that were approved was that the commercials that did not meet Hallmark’s standards included a lesbian couple kissing,” said Mike Chi, Zola’s chief marketing officer, in a statement sent to the AP. “Hallmark approved a commercial where a heterosexual couple kissed.

“All kisses, couples and

marriages are equal celebrations of love and we will no longer be advertising on Hallmark,” Chi said.

In one of the pulled ads, two brides stand at the altar and wonder aloud whether their wedding would be going more smoothly if they had used a wedding planning site like Zola. The lighthearted ad ends with the two brides sharing a quick kiss on the altar.

Actress Sandra Bernhard, who played one of the first openly bisexual characters on network TV in “Roseanne,” also criticized Hallmark’s decision.

Blue-collar character actor Danny Aiello has died at age 86

NEW YORK (AP)—Danny Aiello, the blue-collar character actor whose long career playing tough guys included roles in “Fort Apache, the Bronx,” “Moonstruck” and “Once Upon a Time in America” and his Oscar-nominated performance as a pizza man in Spike Lee’s “Do the Right Thing,” has died. He was 86.

Aiello (pronounced eye-YEL-o) died Thursday night after a brief illness, said his publicist, Tracey Miller, who runs Tracey Miller & Associates. “The family asks for privacy at this time,” she said in a statement.

In a tweet, Cher mourned the man she called “a genius comedic actor.” The two had starred in “Moonstruck” and she called it “one of the happi-

est times in my life.”

Actor Michael Rapaport tweeted that Aiello was a “huge inspiration” and actor Kirk Acevedo mourned: “We lost a great actor today.”

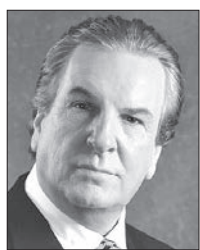
Recognizable, if not famous, for his burly build and husky voice, he was an ex-union president who broke into acting in his 30s and remained a dependable player for decades, whether vicious or cuddly or some of each.

His breakthrough, ironically, was as the hapless lover dumped by Cher in Norman Jewison’s hit comedy “Moonstruck.” His disillusion contributed to the laughter, and although he wasn’t nominated for a supporting-role Oscar

(Cher and Olympia Dukakis won in their categories), Aiello was inundated with movie offers.

“Living in New York City gave me training for any role,” he said in a 1997 interview. “I’ve seen people killed, knifed. I’ve got scars on my face. I have emotional recall when I work; the idea is simply to recreate it. I’ve seen it and experienced it. I’ve played gangsters, teachers but most of my work has been in the police area. And for that I’m adored by the police in New York City.”

The ebullient Aiello became a favorite of several directors, among them Woody Allen, who used him in the



Aiello

Broadway play “The Floating Light Globe” and the movies “Broadway Danny Rose,” “The Purple Rose of Cairo” and “Radio Days.”

Lee was another admirer and for “Do the Right Thing” cast Aiello as a pizzeria operator in a black neighborhood of Brooklyn, the movie climaxing with a riot that destroys his eatery. “This is my pizzeria!” he cried. Lee had first offered the role to Robert De Niro, but Aiello’s performance brought him an Oscar nomination for supporting actor.

Lee on Instagram on Friday lauded Aiello for “making cinema history together” on “Do the Right Thing” and the director wished his friend a final goodbye: “May you rest in paradise.”

Authors scuttle planned TV show about deadly warehouse fire

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Anger over plans for a television series about a deadly warehouse fire in the San Francisco Bay Area has led a husband-and-wife writing team to scuttle the project for now.

The Berkeley, California-based authors Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman said Saturday that since word got out that they were in the early stages of developing a New York Times Magazine article about the 2016 fire at the Ghost Ship warehouse for TV, many friends and families of the victims have urged them to reconsider the project because it was too soon for them to relive the tragedy.

“These appeals have been heartbreaking to hear, and they have changed our minds,” they said in a statement.

CBS Television Studios announced on Tuesday it signed a deal with the couple to produce several TV projects over the next several years, including an adaptation of Chabon’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel “The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay” and a series based on Waldman’s best-selling book, “A Really Good Day.”

Waldman said they hadn’t sold their idea to a network,

but news of a possible TV show about the Ghost Ship fire angered many of the victim’s loved ones. The fire tore through the unpermitted artist warehouse in Oakland during an electronic music party, killing 36 people.

Prosecutors sought to hold two men accountable during an emotionally-charged trial. In September, a jury acquitted one of the men on involuntary manslaughter charges but couldn’t reach a decision about the other.

Earlier in the week, Waldman tweeted that should the project go forward, she and Chabon would present the story “with the greatest sensitivity to and compassion for the victims, their families, and our East Bay community.”

They said they believe there ought to be a conversation about who has the right to tell the story about the Ghost Ship, but that it clearly can’t be conducted without causing further pain to the living victims.

“At this time, therefore, we will not be proceeding, and will do our part to leave the families and survivors to their grief and their loss, in the fervent hope that someday they find not just comfort but also a measure of justice,” they said.

Weinstein lawyer says 98% of creditors agreeing to settle

NEW YORK (AP)—Ninety-eight percent of The Weinstein Co.'s creditors are joining a tentative settlement that plaintiffs say includes \$25 million for over two dozen actresses and former employees who claim Harvey Weinstein sexually harassed them, a lawyer said Thursday.

The attorney, Karen Bitar, provided the estimate to U.S. District Judge Paul A. Engelmayer as she said the deal would cover "the overwhelming" number of individuals and entities potentially owed money.

Additional money, she said, would be set aside for anyone who did not accept the terms of the settlement. The agree-

ment, which would be limited to \$500,000 per person, would require court approval that is unlikely to come before the spring.

The Weinstein Co. is currently proceeding in bankruptcy court, where any deal would face review.

The discussion of the deal revealed by lawyers a day earlier arose during a hearing in Manhattan pertaining to a lawsuit filed against the company and the disgraced movie mogul by former Weinstein consultant Alexandra Canosa.

Canosa, who has not joined the proposed settlement, has alleged that Weinstein on multiple occasions from 2010 to 2017 raped, sexually abused,



AP
Harvey Weinstein, center, arrives for a court hearing, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019 in New York.

Weinstein by lawyers in the case as they prepare to present evidence to a jury.

Canosa's lawyer, Thomas Giuffra, said outside court that the vast majority of women who have sued Weinstein were agreeing to settle because their cases were weakened by allegations so long ago that the statute of limitations would apply.

"They're getting a half-million for an out-of-statute case," he said.

Canosa, he said, was determined to fight on. At least two other women were doing the same, he added.

"They assumed we would just go along with the herd," he said of other lawyers. "She's the most courageous client I've ever had."

Mexico's most famous living author stands by sex abuse claim

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's most famous living author, Elena Poniatowska, is standing by her claim that she was sexually abused by an older colleague in 1954.

Poniatowska, 87, reacted this week after relatives of deceased novelist Juan Jose Arreola lashed out publicly at her.

Poniatowska has said that Arreola was married and in his 40s when he had sex with her and fathered her first child out of wedlock when she was in her early 20s.

In her recent novel "The Polish Lover," Poniatowska described the encounter as "the threat, the attack," and wrote she didn't fully know what was happening to her.

"I am alone. I don't know what love is. What has happened to me. The cot, the threat, the attack have nothing to do with what I have read in books," according to novel, which does not identify Arreola by name.

However, in a later interview with the newspaper Excelsior, Poniatowska said the man was Arreola.

This week, relatives of Arreola, who died in 2001, issued a letter criticizing Poniatowska. They published excerpts of apparently affectionate correspondence between the two, suggesting the encounter was a consensual "sentimental relationship."

The family wrote that "the truth of those years has been transformed today into an unfair narrative of falsehoods."

Poniatowska shot back this week, writing, "It was a relationship between a married adult who knew what he was doing, with a young woman who was inexperienced and unprepared in all senses."

Poniatowska is best known for novels and non-fiction works about the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre and the 1985 Mexico City earthquake.

intimidated and harassed her during what he maintained were business meetings in New York, Los Angeles, Malaysia and Budapest.

Scores of women have accused the movie mogul of

sexual misconduct. He has denied nonconsensual sex allegations. He faces a Jan. 6 trial on rape and sexual assault charges in state court, where he has pleaded not guilty.

Judge Engelmayer agreed

that depositions needed before a trial in Canosa's case against Weinstein could wait to be taken until several weeks after his criminal trial ends. The testimony would include questioning of Canosa and

Couple who bought \$120k banana art sense it will be iconic

MIAMI (AP)—A Miami couple who bought a headline-grabbing banana duct-taped to a wall have acknowledged the absurdity of the artwork, but say they believe it will become an icon and plan to gift it to a museum.

Billy and Beatrice Cox said in a statement that they spent more than \$100,000 on the "unicorn of the art world" after seeing "the public debate it sparked about art and our society."

The conceptual artwork—

"Comedian," by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan—was the talk of last week's Art Basel Miami. The artist sold three editions, each in the \$120,000 to \$150,000 range, according to the Perrotin gallery.

"We are acutely aware of the blatant absurdity of the fact that 'Comedian' is an otherwise inexpensive and perishable piece of produce and a couple inches of duct tape," the Coxes said. "Ultimately

we sense that Cattelan's banana will become an iconic historical object."

The piece was widely parodied on social media. Kelly Ripa and Ryan Seacrest framed a bagel with a piece of duct tape over it and Brooke Shields taped a banana to her forehead, writing, "An expensive selfie," on Instagram.

On Saturday at the art fair, Georgian-born artist David Datuna removed the latest

iteration of the banana from the wall, unpeeled it and took a bite as a large crowd documented the moment with their phones.

"I respect Maurizio, but it's art performance: Hungry artist," said Datuna, who was not among the buyers.

The piece became such a focus of gawking that the gallery removed it Sunday for the final day to encourage viewers to see the rest of the art fair.

'Mad Men' actress Christina Hendricks files for divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Mad Men" actress Christina Hendricks filed for divorce Friday from her husband of 10 years, actor Geoffrey Arend.

Hendricks filed the marriage dissolution documents

in Los Angeles Superior Court, citing irreconcilable differences.

The 44-year-old Hendricks and the 41-year-old Arend have no children.

The two announced their

separation in a statement in October, saying they had an incredible time together, but are now on separate paths though they "will always work together to raise our two beautiful dogs."

Hendricks was nominated for Emmy Awards for six straight years for AMC's "Mad Men," and now stars in the NBC crime drama "Good Girls." Arend starred on the CBS drama "Madam Secretary."

New in-law's rape conviction tests family relationships

DEAR ABBY: My stepdaughter recently married a convicted rapist. She refuses to believe he raped an elderly woman even though there was corroborating DNA evidence. While he admitted his guilt in front of a judge and spent some time in jail, the conviction was later overturned, after which he denied his culpability.

My stepdaughter has two young children from a prior marriage and she's now pregnant with his child. They live in another state. I am a rape survivor. I am absolutely adamant that this man is not welcome in my home.

I do not want to negatively affect my husband's relationship with his daughter, but her decision to become a family with this individual has been difficult for me. She's planning to visit, and I -- and others in our families -- have no idea what to even say to her. How do we handle social interactions? Please help.

STAYING FIRM IN NEW MEXICO

DEAR STAYING FIRM: Because you do not want the husband under your roof, your husband should entertain them separately away from your home. If you HAVE to see them, be warm and cordial to your stepdaughter and non-confrontational to her husband. I advise the same for the other family members whom she plans to visit.

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend, an acquaintance really, who

once confessed to me that he is bisexual. This is not a big deal because I am as well. The problem is, his wife doesn't know he's bi or that he secretly meets men for sex.

I have repeatedly advised him that he shouldn't be doing that and he needs to tell his wife. But all that got me is he ceased talking to me. I don't know if he's still doing it, but I'm assuming so. What, if anything, should I do or say? Should I tell his wife?

ALL FOR TRUTH IN WISCONSIN

DEAR ALL: Put yourself in the wife's situation. If your spouse or significant other was having sex with multiple partners, wouldn't you want to know? If you tell her, she can have her doctor test her for exposure to any number of STDs—all of which are on the rise. Please don't wait.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for 35 years. For the last seven years, we have been separated. He treated me badly, and finally, I refused to take it, so I left him. I moved out, bought a car and bought a home, all on my own. I'm proud of myself.

We have tried marriage counseling, but I felt like we were just going through the motions. He has pressured me in the past about getting back together, but I know he will go right back to his old behavior.

My question is, when is it time to get a divorce? I'm con-

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

fused about just being separated because it makes me feel I'm in limbo.

IN-BETWEEN IN COLORADO

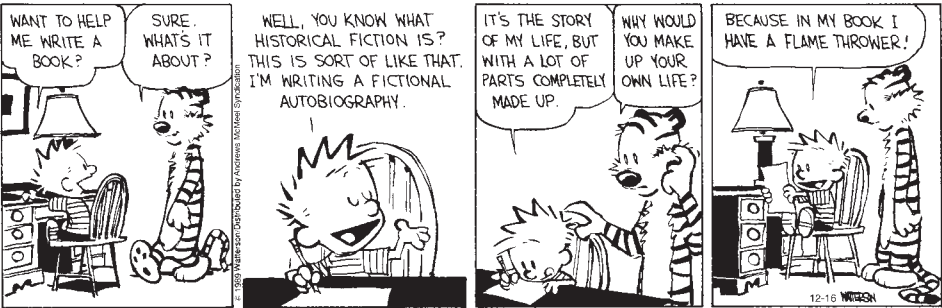
DEAR IN-BETWEEN: You ARE in limbo. You tried marriage counseling; it didn't help you trust that your husband wouldn't continue to abuse you. Call a lawyer. After seven years (!) of separation, the time to formally untie the knot is now.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



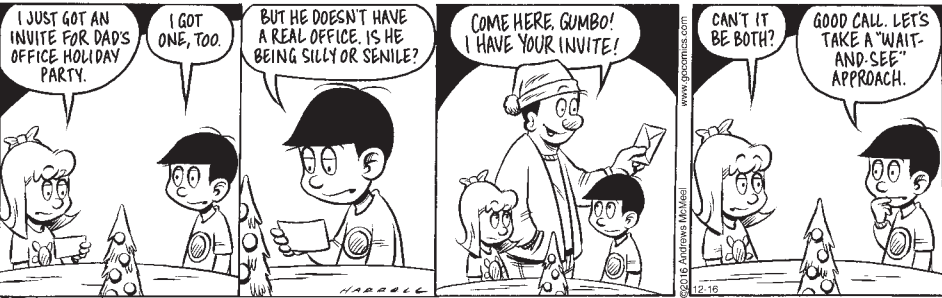
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Kilmer of "The Doors"

4 Of the Arctic

9 Pallid

12 Have bills

13 Speak one's mind

14 "The Greatest"

15 Cadet's place

17 Scooted

18 W. Hemisphere gp.

19 Perfect place

21 Under-ground channels

24 Lounge

25 "— was saying ..."

26 Vat

28 "Swell!"

31 Body powder

33 Witticism

35 Ginger cookie

36 Egypt's neighbor

38 Raw mineral

40 Before

41 Bluenose

43 Together-ness

45 Affluence

47 Roast

48 Listener

49 Speak eloquently

54 Summer hrs.

55 "— a vacation!"

DOWN

1 Pledge

2 Shock partner

3 Guitar master

4 Warhol genre

5 Critter that plays dead

6 Roman

7 Make invalid

8 Gymnast

9 Military aircraft

10 Jai —

11 1492 vessel

16 Sock part

20 Spanish cheers

21 Pre-college exams

22 Birthright

23 Frenzied revelry

27 Ghostly greeting

29 Poi base

30 Store sign

32 Poet

34 Brass instrument

37 Block-head

39 Write

42 Accra's country

44 British verb ending

45 Marries

46 Right on the map?

50 Ballot marks

51 Label

52 Gilbert and Sullivan princess

53 Coquettish

Solution time: 26 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | A | C | E | S | E | B | O | A | T | S |
| T | E | D | O | W | L | A | U | D | I | O |
| A | I | R | N | A | M | E | B | R | A | N |
| M | O | O | S | I | E | V | E | | | |
| P | U | M | A | N | R | A | I | M | A | X |
| | | | L | E | S | N | A | T | I | V |
| S | A | M | O | A | | W | A | D | E | S |
| H | I | G | H | U | P | B | E | L | | |
| E | L | S | A | | E | G | O | Y | A | N |
| | | | A | N | N | O | Y | L | E | I |
| B | R | A | N | D | N | A | M | E | T | E |
| M | O | P | E | D | T | E | N | O | D | E |
| W | E | E | D | S | S | R | S | S | S | S |

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hallee Hirsh, 32; Benjamin Bratt, 56; Sam Robards, 58; Billy Gibbons, 70.

Happy Birthday: Learn to be creative with your cash. Overspending will lead to undue stress and regret. Set up guidelines that will encourage you to make alterations that will help you save, not put you further in debt. Sell off things you no longer need, and focus more on personal gains, better health and fitness, and relationships with like-minded people. Your numbers are 3, 16, 18, 24, 31, 36, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Stay on top of last-minute preparations. It's a busy time of the year, and you don't want to be disappointed or have regrets. A chance to socialize with an old friend will boost your morale and give you something to think about. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Look for a deal, and set plans in motion. Booking a trip or indulging in traditions different from your own will be a welcome education. Keep your money, possessions and personal documents in a safe place. A passionate moment looks inviting. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stick to the truth. If you take a path that isn't factual, you will face scrutiny. Take a greater interest in what others are doing. Listen more, say less and build friendships based on trust; what you receive in return will be monumental. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Explore your creative side, and you will come up with a surprise that will thrill the ones you

love this festive season. With a little ingenuity, cash and preparation, you will outdo anything you have done in the past. Romance is featured. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Be the social butterfly, and you will attract plenty of attention. Avoid opinionated rhetoric, and you'll make new friends and allies. Work-related events will give you the perfect platform to gather the information to strategize upcoming moves. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You need a change of scenery. A day trip will give insight into trends and some ideas that will help you please the people you hold close to your heart. Don't give away a secret or ruin a surprise. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Speak up if you don't like something. It's essential to stand up for yourself and those you love. Don't give in to pressure or bullying. Be passionate about the way you feel and think, and what you believe. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Put your heart on the line, say what you think and make your dreams come true. Stop pussyfooting around; show some spunk when it comes to your relationships and your plans for the upcoming year. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A change at home will help you prepare for something you want to pursue in the upcoming year. Look at your options, and explore the possibility of turning something you love to do into a moneymaking endeavor. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Keep life simple, be direct and make changes that are within your budget. Refuse to get trapped into emotional spending. You cannot buy love or trust, so put your wallet away and offer your time, understanding and devotion. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): How you help others will make an impression. Don't let what others do cause anxiety. People are who they are. You can speak only on your behalf and do what you feel is right for you and those you love. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Above all else, be honest and do your best to make a difference that will improve the lives of those you love. A chance to make a professional move or to make extra cash is apparent. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are persistent, original and optimistic. You are playful and appealing.

Visit EugeniaLast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2019 Andrews McMeel Syndication

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | 3 | 8 | 7 | | 9 | | 5 |
| | | 7 | 3 | | 4 | 6 | | |
| | | | | 9 | | | | |
| | 7 | | | | | | 2 | 4 |
| 2 | | 6 | | 8 | | 3 | | 9 |
| 5 | 3 | | | | | | 8 | |
| | | | | 3 | | | | |
| | | 8 | 6 | | 1 | 2 | | |
| 7 | | 1 | | 2 | 5 | 4 | | 8 |

Difficulty Level ★

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 |
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| 9 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4 |
| 7 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| 1 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 |

Difficulty Level ★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

60 YEARS OF MOTOWN

Solution: 11 letters

L E N O I L O S A N G E L E S
C S S R E N N I P S C A O T M
I L R B E R I C H I E G Y A I
T Y A U S R A T S D A R R E R
Y L A S O U L U W C E V K M A
B P T L S T M I I D I R S L C
E S H O P I N H N N A I E R L
R T S T I H C O O L N G R H E
R A D A Z Z W S C E A O Y S
Y G R T R E N D G N T L D T I
E E O A I I D R D S T M O H R
K L C V B A O S N I O A M M H
O Y E O N U S E U L B T M S C
M T R C P O W O O D N U O R A
S S E M E R P U S O N G C N S

© 2019 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/16

Around, Berry, Blues, Chicago, Chris, City, Clark, Classics, Commodores, Contours, Dance, Dazz, Doowop, Edwin, Gaye, Group, Hits, Label, Legends, Lionel, Los Angeles, Marvin, Miracles, Music, Play, Records, Rhythms, Richie, Robinson, Shop, Sing, Smokey, Song, Soul, Sound, Spinners, Stage, Starr, Stars, Stevie Wonder, Style, Supremes, Tamla, Trend

Last Friday's Answer: Shivering

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

CLASSIFIED ADS



PLACE YOUR
ADVERT HERE!

For opportunities contact us at 235-6397

**WAREHOUSE
for RENT**

REM LOWERBASE
Warehouse #1 Size: 5,000sq/ft
with built-in office & bathroom

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
234-0609 EXT. 158, 285-1317

Land for Sale/Lease

In Talofofo, Saipan
1000 Sq. Meters
On hill, nice view

Call: (670) 285-1152

WHATZIT Solution: Bank balance

RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a complete 5-day run of liner ads, for as low as \$15 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

| | | |
|-----------|--|------|
| ADS | | |
| • 3-Liner | | \$15 |
| • 5-Liner | | \$24 |

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the Saipan Tribune are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.



Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



WHATZIT? © 2019 www.whatzit.com
Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication

www.facebook.com/dingbatgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Subscribe to the CNMI's First
Daily Newspaper for more news,
value and information.

SUBSCRIBING
MEANS



MORE

Please call 235-NEWS

Tiger-led US rallies to win Presidents Cup again

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—High emotions, fierce hugs from Tiger Woods, this time as a winner both ways in the Presidents Cup.

Woods capped off a big year that began with his 15th major at the Masters by playing and leading his U.S. team to another victory in the Presidents Cup on Sunday at Royal Melbourne.

The first playing captain in 25 years, he opened the 12 singles matches by beating Abraham Ancer to set the Presidents Cup record with his 27th match victory, and set the tone for the rest of his team.

The scoreboard was filled with American red scores all day as they rallied from a two-point deficit to win the Presidents Cup for the eighth straight time against an International team that faltered at the worst time.

Matt Kuchar delivered the clinching putt, a 5-footer for birdie that assured him a halve against Louis Oosthuizen and gave the Americans the 15 1/2 points they needed to win.

"For us to be in a hole, to come back and win this thing ... to win it as a team, but to do it with Tiger Woods as our captain was just a huge thrill," Kuchar said.

They result was 16-14, and at least this one was a contest. The U.S. victory two years ago at Liberty National was so resounding that it nearly ended on Saturday.

International captain Ernie Els was determined to turn it around. He created a new logo for the International team. He relied heavily on analytics. It still wasn't enough.

"I followed a plan, and it didn't quite work out, but we came damn close," Els said. "If you compare our team on paper with other teams in other sport, you would have laughed us out of the building. But we gave it a hell of a go and we came mightily close to winning



U.S. team player and captain Tiger Woods, center, holds the trophy with his players after the U.S. team won the President's Cup golf tournament at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019. The U.S. team won the tournament, 16-14.

and upsetting one of the greatest golf teams of all time."

Els thought back to Friday, when the Americans won two matches with birdies on the 18th hole and rallied to halve another to keep the International lead from growing.

On Sunday, all he saw was U.S. momentum that couldn't be stopped.

"We gave you everything we had," Els said to Woods at the closing ceremony. "You were the better team."

Woods hugged everyone hard, players and vice captains alike, wearing a smile not seen since he walked off the 18th green at Augusta National after becoming a Masters champion again after injuries that nearly ended his career.

"We relied on one another as a team, and we did it -- together," Woods said, his voice choked slightly with emotion. "This cup wasn't going to be given to us. We had to go earn it. And we did."

Els fashioned the youngest International team from a record nine countries from everywhere outside Europe and took a 10-8 lead into the final day, the first time it had the edge in 16 years.

It wasn't enough. Patrick Reed, whose caddy was benched for shoving a fan who had cursed Reed from close range Saturday, built a 6-up lead through seven holes before eventually putting away C.T. Pan to win for the

first time this week.

Webb Simpson, who played with Reed as they lost all three team matches, never trailed in beating Byeong Hun An. Everyone on the U.S. team contributed something.

With so much red on the board, Tony Finau might have been his team the biggest boost. He was 4 down through 10 holes against Hideki Matsuyama, won the next four holes and earned a half-point.

It came down to the final hole in South Korea four years ago. This time, the Americans were assured of a tie if the Internationals were to win the last three matches, creating at least a little drama.

But it was a familiar end-

ing. The Americans now are 11-1-1 in an event that began in 1994.

"It's hard to digest," said Adam Scott, who has played in nine Presidents Cup without ever winning. "It's incredibly disappointing but ... I like where this team is going, and I'll be working really hard now to be on the team in two more years."

The only International victory was in 1998 at Royal Melbourne, and several players from that team came to Australia this week to conjure up good vibes. It only worked for so long.

The Americans won the singles session for the first time since 2009. Most years, their lead was so big it wasn't

critical. This time it was. They hadn't trailed since 2003 in South Africa, the year of the tie.

So inspired was the American play that none of their six singles victories made it to the 18th hole.

The last two matches were halved, and the 8-4 advantage in singles matched the record for the largest Sunday margin since the Americans won 8-4 in the inaugural Presidents Cup in 1994.

The next Presidents Cup is in 2021 at Quail Hollow Club in North Carolina. In the meantime, the Americans will try to get on another team and win back the Ryder Cup, which gives them far more trouble.



One of the most talked about names

on the trade market this week has been two-time AL Cy Young winner Corey Kluber. The long-time Cleveland Indians ace has been made available in talks and reports on Saturday suggested several teams were showing interest.

However, one main suitor has also dropped out of the race—the Los Angeles Angels.

As for the Los Angeles Dodgers, they are now among the teams in the mix.

The San Diego Padres and Texas Rangers are involved as well.

Kluber's 2019 was basically a lost season thanks to a slow start—5.80 ERA in first seven starts—and a season-ending forearm fracture suffered on May 1. In the five previous sea-

Dodgers in, Angels out in trade talks for Kluber

sons, Kluber had been durable and at times dominant, posting a 2.85 ERA over 160 starts.

It was previously suggested that teams could wait until spring training to gauge Kluber's health. At this point the market seems to be moving too fast for that to hold true.

Padres 'taking closer look' at Bumgarner

The teams in the NL West appear to really like free agent Madison Bumgarner.

The Padres are the latest team to show interest in the former Giants ace.

Bumgarner has been linked to the Dodgers and D-backs this week. The Rockies are the only NL West foe not to be linked to the 2014 World Series MVP.

The Angels, in the AL West, reportedly are also pursuing Bumgarner after missing out on top free agent Gerrit Cole.

With Cole, Stephen Strassburg and Zack Wheeler off the free-agent market, Bumgarner, Keuchel and Hyun-Jin Ryu are the best available arms remaining.

Most Giants fans would like to see Bumgarner return to San Francisco. But if he doesn't, they would probably prefer if he leaves the NL West. It would be tough to watch the longtime face of the Giants come back to pitch against his former team multiple times a year.

Rendon eager to team up with Trout

Anthony Rendon and agent

Scott Boras had just wrapped up the third baseman's \$245 million deal to join the Los Angeles Angels last Wednesday when Mike Trout began blowing up his phone.

"Based on his exclamation points in his texts, he seemed really excited," Rendon said with a grin.

Two of the majors' best hitters are forming a well-paid partnership in Orange County, and they are both excited to reward Angels owner Arte Moreno's largesse with post-season success.

The Angels formally introduced Rendon at Angel Stadium on Saturday, welcoming the championship-winning slugger to their star-studded lineup.

Rendon left the Washing-

ton Nationals to team up with Trout, Shohei Ohtani, Albert Pujols, Andreton Simmons and Justin Upton in the Angels' loaded lineup.

But the World Series star insisted his lavish new contract—a seven-year deal with the biggest average annual value ever given to a third baseman—wasn't as important as the words he heard from Moreno, the Angels' 73-year-old owner.

"Arte and Carol (Moreno) were really adamant about reaching out to Scott and saying they wanted me to be a part of the Angel organization," Rendon said while holding his daughter, Emma, and sitting next to his wife, Amanda.

"That meant a lot to me and

my family, to have that respect, to really feel wanted," Rendon added. "That was one important thing that we always talked about trying to look for in an organization where we wanted to head to or stay at, was a family atmosphere, somewhere that we could plant our roots in, lay a foundation and just grow our family together."

Moreno has been following Rendon's career since the native Houstonian was a collegiate slugger at Rice, where Moreno had friends in athletic administration. Moreno followed Rendon's rise with the Nationals up to last season, when he led the majors in RBIs and earned his first All-Star selection before repeatedly coming up with clutch hits during Washington's improbable playoff run.

LaVine's clutch basket helps Bulls stun Clippers



CHICAGO (AP)— After blowing several late leads to lose games, the Chicago Bulls were able to flip the script Saturday night.

Zach LaVine scored 31 points and converted a decisive three-point play in the Bulls' 109-106 victory over the short-handed and weary Los Angeles Clippers.

Chicago trailed by five points with less than two minutes to go. Tied at 106, the Bulls inbounded with 5.4 seconds left. LaVine got the ball near the 3-point line, drove to his right and was fouled by Montrezl Harrell as he scored with 2 seconds left.

Paul George then missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

"We made big plays," LaVine said. "I think that's what it comes down to, making plays."

"We've been playing good, but we just haven't been able to get that win in the last two minutes, three minutes of the game. Hopefully, we can start stringing some together."

Lauri Markkanen had 13 points and 17 rebounds, Thaddeus Young scored 17 points, and Denzel Valentine had 16 for the Bulls.

Harrell had 30 points and George had 27 for Los Angeles. The Clippers had won four in a row.

Besides playing for the third time in four days at the end of a six-game trip, the Clippers were without Kawhi Leonard (injury management, left knee soreness), Lou Williams (right calf), Patrick Beverly (concussion) and JaMychal Green (tailbone contusion).

This was the eighth game Leonard has missed. He scored 42 points Friday night at Minnesota.

George was asked if the poor finish was a result of fatigue. "Not necessarily," he said. "This isn't new. We just got outplayed tonight."

Los Angeles led by 15 points midway through the second quarter before Chicago closed the first half with a 19-6 run to pull to 57-55.

The Bulls continued the surge early in the third, scoring 17 straight points for a 75-61 lead.

Spurs 121, Suns 119 OT

In Mexico City, Patty Mills made a jumper from the free throw line with 0.3 seconds left in the San Antonio Spurs' record-setting fourth consecutive overtime game, and they outlasted the Phoenix Suns.

The NBA record book shows 20 instances of teams playing three straight overtime games—but never four



straight, like the Spurs have. They're 3-1 in those games, their best stretch since opening the season 4-1.

DeMar DeRozan pulled the Spurs even with a drive and fling -- after a foul by Mikal Bridges—down the right side of the lane, but missed the free throw. The ball went out of bounds on a scramble after the missed free throw, and San Antonio kept the ball after a replay review.

Phoenix, with star guard Devin Booker sitting out because of a sore forearm, overcame a late seven-point deficit to force overtime on Kelly Oubre Jr.'s 3-pointer from the corner in the final seconds.

Mills led the Spurs with 26 points. DeRozan, LaMarcus Aldridge and DeJounte Murray each added 18 for San Antonio, and Lonnie Walker IV had 16 on his 21st birthday.

Ricky Rubio had 25 points and 13 assists for Phoenix. Frank Kaminsky added 22, and Oubre had 17.

Bucks 125, Cavaliers 108

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 29 points and Khriston Middleton had 24 to lead the Bucks to their 18th consecutive victory.

The Bucks have won 22 of their last 23 and improved to 24-3, a half-game ahead of the idle Los Angeles Lakers for the best record in the league. The Bucks have not lost since Nov. 8 at Utah.

The streak is the second longest in franchise history. The Bucks won 20 consecutive games in the 1970-71 season

on the way to winning their lone NBA championship.

Kevin Porter Jr. had 15 points and Jordan Clarkson scored 13 for Cleveland.

Heat 122, Mavericks 118, OT

In Dallas, Luka Doncic left early with a sprained ankle and Dallas rallied from 24 points down without its young star before falling to Miami in overtime.

Doncic's right foot landed on the foot of Heat guard Kendrick Nunn on a drive less than two minutes into the game.

Bam Adebayo put Miami in front for good on a put-back dunk with 1:15 remaining in overtime and finished with 18 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his second triple-double in three games.

Without Doncic, Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 18 of his 28 points in the second half to help Dallas rally, but was shut out in overtime. Kristaps Porzingis, the other half of Dallas' star European pairing with Doncic, had 22 points and 14 rebounds but couldn't convert on two possessions late in the extra period.

Butler led Miami with 27 points. They were playing a night after a 113-110 loss to LeBron James and the Lakers at home.

Raptors 110, Nets 102

In Toronto, Pascal Siakam scored 30 points, Marc Gasol set season highs with 17 points and 15 rebounds and the Raptors beat Brooklyn to snap a three-game home losing streak.

Norman Powell fouled out

with 25 points and Kyle Lowry had 17 to help the Raptors win their ninth straight home game against the Nets and beat Brooklyn for the 16th time in 17 meetings.

Serge Ibaka had 12 points and 12 rebounds as Toronto extended an NBA record by winning its 34th straight at home against a division foe. The Raptors are unbeaten at home against Atlantic Division opponents since a Nov. 10, 2015, loss to the New York Knicks.

Pistons 115, Rockets 107

In Houston, Luke Kennard scored 22 points, Derrick Rose added 20 off the bench and Detroit beat the Rockets.

The Pistons didn't trail in the last two quarters and were

Los Angeles Clippers forward/center Montrezl Harrell, second from left, shoots against Chicago Bulls guard Kris Dunn, left, guard Denzel Valentine, second from right, and center Wendell Carter Jr., during the second half of an NBA game Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019, in Chicago.

up by double figures for most of the second half.

James Harden led the Rockets with 39 points after two straight 50-point games, but it wasn't enough to keep Houston's winning streak going on a night Russell Westbrook sat out to rest. Harden played 38 1/2 minutes, but was taken out with 1:23 left and didn't return.

Rose had 12 assists, Bruce Brown had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Markieff Morris added 15 points.

Nuggets 110, Thunder 102

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 28 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists for his fourth triple-double of the season, leading the Nuggets past Oklahoma City.

Jokic has 32nd regular-season triple-doubles to tie Rajon Rondo for 11th on the career list.

Will Barton added 18 points and Jamal Murray had 14 to help the Nuggets beat the Thunder for the seventh straight time. Dennis Schroder had 22 points to lead the Thunder.

Grizzlies 128, Wizards 111

In Memphis, Dillon Brooks scored 27 points, rookie Brandon Clarke added 25 and the Grizzlies sent Washington to its fourth straight loss.

Ja Morant added 18 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 16 to help the Grizzlies win for the third time in the last four. Bradley Beal led the Wizards with 29 points, but was 8 of 23 from the field.

FIFA to consider four bids to host 2023 Women's World Cup

SWITZERLAND (AP)— FIFA has received bids from Brazil, Japan, Colombia and a joint bid from Australia and New Zealand to host the 2023 Women's World Cup.

Soccer's international governing body will now assess the bids, which will include visiting each country. Evaluations will be submitted to the FIFA Council and a vote on the host will be held at the organization's meeting in Ethiopia next June.

Anticipated bids from South Korea and South Africa were withdrawn before Friday's deadline.

The 2023 World Cup will feature 32 teams, up

from the 24 that competed this summer at the tournament in France. The United States won its second straight World Cup title and fourth overall this year, and the event enjoyed unprecedented television viewership of 1.12 billion worldwide.

"France 2019 was certainly a watershed moment for women's football, and now it is FIFA's responsibility to take concrete measures to keep fostering the game's incredible growth," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said in a statement. "With the FIFA Women's World Cup

generating an unprecedented interest across member associations, we are ensuring that the process to select the hosts is seamless, objective, ethical and transparent. By the time the FIFA Council announces the hosts, there should be no doubt whatsoever as to why that choice was made."

The Japan Football Association has already launched a website hyping its bid, which encourages supporters to submit "My Dream of 2023" hopes for the event. Japan's association proposes using eight stadiums, including the new National Stadium.

Football Federation Australia and New Zealand Football announced the co-confederation bid Friday in Melbourne, just hours before the official bid book was submitted to FIFA.

Brazil hosted the men's 2014 World Cup as well as the 2016 Olympics.

The Korean Football Association had initially pushed to jointly host the games with North Korea at the urging of Infantino but strained inter-Korean relations failed to realize a unified bid. South Korea, which hosted the 2002 men's World Cup with Japan, announced its withdrawal shortly before Friday's deadline.



Ravens soaring toward No. 1 seed in AFC



BALTIMORE

(AP)—Seven-time Pro Bowl guard Marshal Yanda owns a Super Bowl ring

and has played on several excellent teams with the Baltimore Ravens, including seven that won at least 10 games and three that reached the AFC championship game.

In his estimation, the current edition of the Ravens top them all.

Unbeaten since September and having already clinched a second straight AFC North crown, Baltimore (12-2) has only one goal left on its regular-season checklist: top seed in the AFC playoffs.

"We've won 10 games in a row. We've never done that here," Yanda said Thursday night after the Ravens pummeled the New York Jets 42-21. "This is definitely the best team I've ever been on."

That assessment may ultimately change if the Ravens don't bring home another Super Bowl trophy. This is Baltimore's fourth AFC North title under coach John Harbaugh, who at this time isn't interested in stacking this team against the other three.

"Two of those teams won some playoff games. One of them won a Super Bowl," he said. "So, until we do that, we don't compare."

Fair enough, but at this point in the season there appears to be no better team than Baltimore, which owns the best record in the NFL and needs only



one win in its final two games to sew up the No. 1 seed in the AFC for the first time.

The Ravens have defeated several of the better teams in the league -- including New England, San Francisco and Houston at home and Seattle, Buffalo and the Los Angeles Rams on the road.

All of this with a 22-year-old, second-year quarterback. On a night when Lamar Jackson set the NFL single-season record for yards rushing by a quarterback, he torched the Jets with five touchdown passes to raise his league-leading total to 33.

"He's changing the games for

us," Yanda said. "It starts with the quarterback playing well."

Mere minutes after the Ravens clinched the division crown and extended their winning streak, they started looking forward to a bit of rest and a Dec. 22 game at Cleveland.

"To be able to stack this number of wins is remark-

able," Harbaugh said. "And yet, you get to this point, and the next one becomes the most important one."

The Ravens' top-ranked run game ripped through the second-ranked defense against the rush. Jackson amassed 86 yards rushing on only eight carries and Baltimore aver-

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson scrambles against the New York Jets during the first half of an NFL game, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, in Baltimore. On the run, Jackson broke the single season record for most rush yards by a quarterback in NFL history.

aged 6.4 yards per attempt against a New York defense that was yielding only three yards per rush.

Then again, there's something to be said for a passing game that totaled 212 yards and five scores through the air.

Baltimore's special teams took the night off. Not only did the Jets total 179 yards on seven kickoff returns and score on a blocked punt, but Ravens kicker Justin Tucker missed an extra point.

"We played really well on special teams (in Buffalo) last week," Harbaugh said. "We played not well at all this week. So that's an area of concern right now."

With the game in hand, Harbaugh turned to backup quarterback Robert Griffin III with 7:35 left.

"It was not an easy decision right there," Harbaugh said. "Probably, the biggest thing is we have so much confidence in Robert. It makes you feel really good about doing it."

Given how often Jackson runs the ball, it's imperative to limit the hits he takes and a luxury to have a veteran such as Griffin at No. 2 on the depth chart.

The repercussions for the New England Patriots' admitted taping of the Cincinnati Bengals' sideline appear to be coming into focus.

The league is likely to penalize the Patriots and is considering discipline in line with recent penalties for violations of game day rules, according to The Washington Post's Mark Maske. That could reportedly mean a fine of hundreds of thousands of dollars and the potential loss or reduction of a low-level draft pick.

Among the precedents reported are the New York Giants' \$150,000 fine and downgrading of its fourth-round pick for then-head coach Ben McAdoo's illegal use of a walkie-talkie in 2016 and the Atlanta Falcons' \$350,000 fine and loss of a fifth-rounder for pumping artificial crowd noise at their stadium in 2015.

The most infamous example is also the most severe and familiar to Patriots fans: the \$1 million penalty, stripping of first- and fourth-round picks and four-game suspension of Tom Brady for Deflategate.

Pats could lose draft pick over 'Spygate' 2.0

The NFL wanted to make an example out of the Patriots with that penalty. We'll see if tries to the same for this latest offense. The league's investigation is reportedly still in progress.

The Patriots' latest scandal began when a team employee was seen videotaping the Bengals' sideline in the Cleveland Browns' press box a week before they were scheduled to visit Cincinnati.

Early reports indicated the whole thing was a massive misunderstanding and part of the filming of a "Do Your Job" behind-the-scenes segment on a Patriots advance scout, but then it was reported that a Patriots videographer really had been filming the Bengals sideline for eight minutes.

The Patriots released a statement acknowledging a "failure to inform the Bengals and the league" and admitting the production crew "inappropriately filmed the field from the press box." They claimed

that the employee in question was actually an independent contractor that didn't know the rules.

Meanwhile, Brady says he is still having fun playing football, even in the midst of one of the most challenging seasons of his career.

"I love it," he said on Friday, though he balked at saying whether he likes it as much as he used to.

The defending Super Bowl champions head into Sunday's game against Cincinnati in a prolonged slump, losing two in a row and three of their last five games. Since the start of Week 9, they are 30th in the NFL with an average of 17.6 points per game; only the Bengals and Jaguars are worse.

Brady said the Patriots (10-3), who can clinch a playoff berth with a win Sunday, are making progress.

"Guys are working really hard and that's been great to see and that's what we've got to keep doing," he said.

"Things just don't kind of happen magically, so we're working pretty hard at it."

It's not uncommon for the Patriots to have struggles during the regular season. They had a similar slump last year in December but went on to win their sixth Super Bowl since 2001.

"Every year, it's a little bit different. The challenges are different," Brady said. "You just can't rely on, 'Oh, well. We'll just do exactly what we used to do,' or, 'We'll do exactly what we did last week.' You have to kind of reinvent yourself every week. ... It's always a little bit of a challenge, but football season is not supposed to be easy."

The Patriots lost to the Houston Texans two weeks ago and Kansas City last week, just the ninth time since 2003 that they have lost back-to-back games. They have not lost three straight in that span.

Never in Brady's career has the offense struggled so

much. It is 17th this season in third-down conversion percentage (37.4%) and scoring on 48% of the trips inside the 20-yard line, which ranks 27th in the league.

"We've got to maximize our potential, and I don't know what our potential is," Brady said. "If we do it well one time, it's how well can we do it consistently? I think part of it's just consistently we haven't done a great job, and I think that when you're not consistent, it just leads to other issues. Trying to be consistent and dependable is what a great offense is all about, and when you have really great play-making ability, all those things make it very hard to defend."

New England is one game in front of Buffalo in the AFC East. The Bills come to Gillette Stadium next weekend.

Gronk joins All-Time Team

Hall of Fame tight ends Mike

Ditka, Kellen Winslow, John Mackey and Tony Gonzalez have been selected to the NFL's All-Time Team.

Joining them on the squad is recent retiree Rob Gronkowski.

The league revealed the tight ends and offensive linemen for the squad on Friday night. A 26-member panel is making the selections as part of the NFL's celebration of its centennial season.

Tackles on the team are Hall of Famers Anthony Munoz, Forrest Gregg, Art Shell, Roosevelt Brown, Jonathan Ogden, Cal Hubbard and Walter Jones.

The guards are Jim Parker, John Hannah, Larry Allen, Gene Upshaw, Dan Fortmann, Randall McDaniel, and Bruce Matthews. Again, all are enshrined in Canton, Ohio.

At center, players chosen are Mike Webster, Dwight Stephenson, Jim Otto and Mel Hein, all Hall of Famers.

Indeed, Gronk, who won't be eligible for another four years, is the only non-Hall of Famer selected.

Islander, Hoopaholics hammer opponents

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Islander Rent A Car and the Hoopaholics waltzed past their respective foes in the Open Division of the United Filipino Organization and IT&E 2019 Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

In the curtain-raiser, Islander pounced on Pacific Islands Club, 105-56, while in the second game, the Hoopaholics walloped Saipan Vegas, 73-50.



Islander went for the kill right in the first quarter, as it built a 30-12 advantage after the opening 10 minutes of play. Mac Mintac led Islander's jackrabbit start, as he nearly matched PIC's total output after making 8 points. Elgene Mangali added 5 markers, while Mii Tekopua, Ken Viray, and Sydney Quan chipped in 4 points apiece.

After a strong start, Mintac was held to one field goal in the second period, but Viray, Mangali, Rocyl Ritual, Joseph

Torres, and John Pastrana were there to steady the ship and help Islander cruise to victory.

Viray finished with a team-high 22 points, while Torres added 14, 12 of them came from downtown. Mintac also had twin digits with his 14, while Pastrana and Ritual combined for 18.

James Abuy led PIC with his 25 points, including 21 from beyond the arc.

In the second game, the Hoopaholics held Saipan Vegas to 1 point in the first quarter to take early control of the game.

John Ramos split his free throws for Saipan Vegas' lone point in the lackluster opening canto.

While only one player hit the board for Saipan Vegas, the Hoopaholics drew contributions from eight players in the first period, allowing the team to gain a 21-1 advantage. Alex Lauron had 6 points in the first frame, while Dexter Tenorio and Melvin Cadiang chipped in 3 apiece.

The Hoopaholics continued to spread the wealth in the next three quarters to pin down Saipan Vegas, which leaned heavily on Leo Galarse. The former Saipan Southern High School standout was held to 3 points in the first half before finishing strong with 16



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

United Filipino Organization and IT&E 2019 Basketball League commissioner Lito Espino, right, presents the Forex Best Player of the Game prize to Islander Rent A Car's Ken Viray last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Islander routed Pacific Islands Club, 105-56.

markers in the last 20 minutes of play. However, no other Saipan Vegas player made double figures in the squad's third loss in as many games.

Lauron and Maverick Itibus led the Hoopaholics' balanced attack after posting 12 points each, while Tenorio and Cadiang had 11 apiece. Mel Mani-

busan was the fifth Hoopaholics players to earn twin digits in scoring with his 10 markers, while Kelvin Fitial and Walter Mendez combined for 12.

GARAPAN

From Page 28

Garapan, which earned a 9-0 record in the regular season of the 10-team tournament, did not drop a set in the single-elimination play-off round. The Mallards also swept Kagman Elementary School in its first game in the playoffs, 21-7, 21-15, to move to the semis of the upper half of the bracket.

In the semifinals, though Garapan needed only two sets to eliminate William S. Reyes Elementary School, the former had to work doubly hard to avoid the latter's upset bid. In the first set, the Mallards pulled

off a 21-20 victory. Garapan went on to oust the Kingfishers and advance to the finals with a 21-16 triumph in the second set. WSR, before bowing to Garapan, downed Grace Christian Academy 2, 21-17, 21-18, to notch a Final Four berth at the top half of the draw.

At the bottom half, Koblerville reached the finals after eliminating Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School and Oleai Elementary School. Against GTC, the Umangs posted a 21-14, 21-17 win, while versus the Turtles, Koblerville had a tougher time in two sets, 21-19, 21-18. Oleai marched into the semis after topping GCA 1, 21-16, 21-18.

KANOA

From Page 28

Allyssya Angeles, but instead of kicking the ball quickly and hard, she took her time. The keeper did not notice Pagarao sneaking in closer and by the time the former release the short kick, the latter anticipated it and took a shot to give Kanoa a 1-0 lead just two minutes into the game.

Kanoa hung on to the shaky 1-0 advantage at the break, as it repeatedly frustrated TanHoldings' bids to score, particularly Chavez, who made several attempts, but Kanoa goalie Theresa Toves was there for the saves in the first half.

Then early in the second half, Kanoa turned a precarious one-point lead to 3-0 with Pagarao and Joyce teaming up for the next two goals of the squad. Both Pagarao and Joyce entered the penalty area with TanHoldings defense collapsing on the latter near the right post. Joyce recognized the opportunity and swung the ball to Pagarao, who was left open for a goal in the 26th minute.

Three minutes later, Pagarao returned the favor to Joyce to give Kanoa a 3-0 lead. Pagarao intercepted a pass from Christina Atalig to Chavez and dribbled to center before feeding Joyce to the right and the latter unloaded a shot just when she entered the penalty

area. The ball then rolled in between the legs of Aniana and into the goal, allowing Kanoa to widen the gap.

Then just when Kanoa seemed ready to ease its way to victory, TanHoldings fought back in the last 20 minutes of the finale with Costales sparking the rally.

Costales broke TanHoldings' silence in the 30th minute, as she dribbled and eluded Kanoa defender Sharmaine Francisco for a left cross volley outside the penalty area.

However, Kanoa countered with two quick goals (36th and 40th minute) to increase the lead, 5-1. The fourth goal came when Francisco played

the ball in and passed it to Pagarao, who spotted Joyce cutting to the middle and the latter scored her second goal, as Aniana dropped to her knees, but was a bit late for the save. The fifth goal was also courtesy of Joyce, who stole possession from Mary Joy Aniana and dribbled all the way to complete her hat trick.

Despite facing the biggest deficit in the game, TanHoldings remained persistent and continued to fight back with the clock working against the squad. It moved within 3 in the 42nd minute of the 50-minute game when Costales found the back of the net off a miss from

Chavez, who unloaded a shot at the center, but the ball was partially deflected by Toves. Fortunately for TanHoldings, Costales was there for the trail job and with the ball bouncing off Toves' hands, Costales took a shot from the left wing.

The TanHoldings' key player made it three in a throw after receiving a perfect pass from Chavez in the 43rd minute. Chavez played the ball in and with Kanoa's defense had yet to set up, Costales moved into the center and made her third goal in the game.

From four goals down, TanHoldings went on to threaten Kanoa, cutting the deficit to

one. Chavez, this time, hit the goal with a little over three minutes left in the match. Kristelle Itaas played the ball in, but her long kick dropped in front of Chavez, who took just a few dribbles and did not wait for Kanoa defenders, as she unloaded her shot outside the penalty area.

Now ahead by only one, Kanoa used the clock to its advantage, while TanHoldings made a couple more attempts to knot the count, but faltered. The closest was when Chavez played the ball in and again Costales entered the picture, but the leather was a bit way out to her right. Angeles then

tried to go for a follow-up, but Itaas was there and used her body to deflect the ball.

Kanoa kept melting down the clock, which finally expired with Pagarao and Chavez contesting for the last possession.

Kanoa, after the hard-fought finale, was handed the championship trophy and medals. Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan and D&Q Saipan regional sales manager Marilyn Marron presented the trophy and medals to Kanoa and also handed out the runner-up and third place awards to TanHoldings and Matansa Football Club, respectively.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TanHoldings Football Club players receive their runner-up trophy from Northern Mariana Island Football Association president Jerry Tan, left, and D&Q Saipan regional sales manager Marilyn Marron, right.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TanHoldings Football Club's Kaithlyn Chavez, left, takes a shot and is chased by Kanoa Football Club defender Ericka Santiago.



**Tiger-led US
rallies to win
Presidents
Cup again**

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune Sports

**LaVine's
clutch basket
helps Bulls
stun Clippers**

PAGE 25



28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2019

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Kanoa outlasts TanHoldings



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TanHoldings Football Club's Emalyn Aniana, second left, prevents Irish Pagarao of Kanoa from scoring a goal during the first half of their title game in Division A of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Kanoa Football Club survived a late scare from TanHoldings Football Club to eke out a 5-4 victory in their title duel in Division A of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kanoa Football Club players and officials pose with their championship trophy after beating TanHoldings Football Club, 5-4, in the title game in Division A of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last Friday at the TSL Sports Complex. Joining them in the photo are Northern Mariana Island Football Association president Jerry Tan, left, and Marilyn Marron, standing third right, regional sales manager of D&Q Saipan—the distributor of Dove products on island.

Paulyn Joyce delivered a hat trick in the second half to give Kanoa enough cushion and help the squad withstand a gallant fight from TanHold-

ings. Irish Pagarao scored the two other goals for Kanoa, while Katrina Costales made three for TanHoldings,



and Kaithlyn Chavez registered the other goal for the runner-up squad. Pagarao drew first blood in the finale, as she

capitalized on an early mental lapse from goalie Emalyn Aniana, who received a pass from

See KANOA on Page 27

Holiday binge eating and slow metabolism

To say that I'm excited for Christmas and the New Year would be an understatement. There is one thing that grinds my gears during this time of the year, though. You know what I'm talking about. Making the same New Year's resolution about getting back into the gym and in shape.

You tell yourself it's going to be different, but no matter how many times you drill it into your head the outcome is always the same. I'm not one to reference or echo the sentiments of notable figures to stake my claim, but Albert Einstein said it best, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."

Nevertheless, here we are.

Q: Eating healthy this time of the year is tough. I'm scared to lose all my progress, but I also want to indulge. What can I do to ensure I don't fall off the wagon?

A: Don't feel guilty. The indulging naturally picks up just due to the fact it's that

Ask **DRE:**

By **DRE DELOS SANTOS**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Dre Delos Santos writes about fitness and nutrition for Saipan Tribune and TAGA Sports. He is a personal trainer at Gold's Gym. He is featured on fitness sites such as Weight Watchers, T-Nation, and STACK.



time of the year. Enjoy it. But at the same time a bit of dietary restraint shouldn't be lost on you. Otherwise, things can spiral out of control in a hurry. Save it for when it matters. Have wholesome, nutritious meals throughout the day. Then, later in the evening (when you're most likely to indulge) go at it.

Q: How come at the very beginning the weight comes off pretty easy. Then, it starts to slow down. Do I need to change things up to avoid a plateau?

A: I can't definitively say no because there are indeed folks who have no idea what

to do. With regards to your metabolism, it will understandably take a hit the further you go into weight loss. There are a few ways to sort of mitigate the drop in your daily energy expenditure, but it's what inevitably happens.

In fact, this is the glaring issue with crash diets because sooner rather than later your body starts to fight back against weight loss particularly yo-yo dieters. As a result, their back singing the same old song. In general, adequate protein and maintaining an exercise regimen should be kept on the table regardless of what phase you're in.

Garapan rules elementary v-ball

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Garapan Elementary School swept Koblerville Elementary School in the finals of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic

Volleyball League last Saturday at Oleai Sports Complex.

The Mallards dominated the Umangs in two sets, 21-13, 21-8, to clinch the elementary title (co-ed fourth and fifth grade) and complete their undefeated season. The champion team has Claude Ruben, Aiden Camacho, Adrian

Bravo, Elisa Yleisa, Ericka Zanduetta, Jovien Magofna, Marlin Chang, VikcyShen, Alvin Saimon, Romeo Aldan, and Preston Ngiramos on its roster, while the squad is coached by Paul Salalila and Walter Mendez.

See GARAPAN on Page 27



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Garapan Elementary School, right, and Koblerville Elementary School players and coaches gather for a photo before their finals match in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Volleyball League last Saturday at Oleai Sports Complex.